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ABSTRACT

This guide presents the Department of Education's strategy for ending social promotion in public schools. It opens with a description of social promotion and the pervasiveness and the consequences of this practice. The volume outlines the high standards that all students should be held to and emphasizes the importance of creating reliable measures of achievement against standards. The guide details how high achievement can be attained consistently through the delivery of high-quality curriculum and instruction, through the inclusion of families, and through the involvement of community stakeholders. The guide highlights the importance of starting early and providing opportunities for the preschool years. The guide calls for a renewed emphasis on early childhood and family literacy and discusses how to strengthen learning opportunities in the classroom. Some of these strategies include identifying and intervening early with students at risk of falling behind, ensuring that there is a well-prepared teacher in every classroom, using research-based practices, and reducing class size. Other possible solutions to social promotion involve extended learning, such as afterschool programs, developing ways to help students who fail to meet standards, and holding schools accountable for performance and then helping them to improve. (Contains 75 references.) (RJM)

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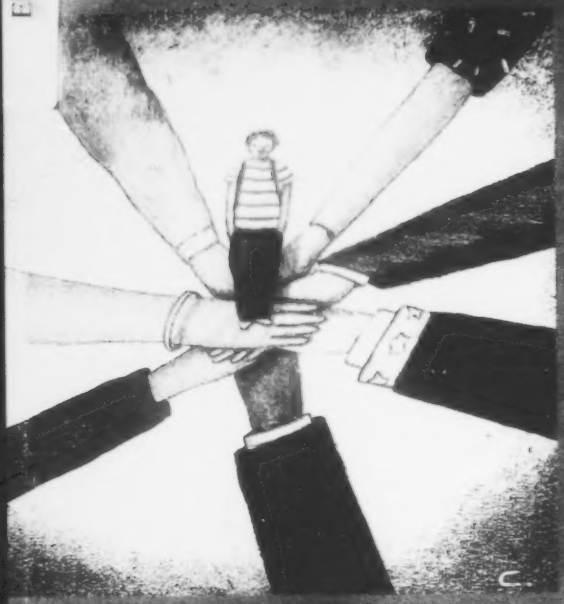
Taking responsibility for ending social promotion means ensuring that students have the opportunity and assistance they need to meet challenging standards.

Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education



TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENDING SOCIAL PROMOTION

A Guide for Educators and State and Local Leaders

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Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion

A Guide for Educators and State and Local Leaders

If we are going to go strong into the 21st century, we must continue to expand opportunity for all of our people--and when it comes to our children's education, that means continuing to expect and demand the very best from our schools, our teachers, and, above all, from our students. That is why I have fought for excellence, competition, and accountability in our nation's public schools, with more parental involvement, greater choice, better teaching, and an end to social promotion. We cannot afford to let our children down when they need us the most.

—President Clinton, January 1998

May 1999

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

May 1999

Dear Colleague:

I am sure you share with me the concern expressed by the President about the need to end social promotion in our schools. I am pleased to respond to this concern with a guide for educators and state and local leaders confronting the serious challenge of what to do about the detrimental practice of promoting students who are unprepared academically. This guide is intended for leaders who want to take responsibility for ending social promotion and to support students in achieving high standards.

Students who are promoted without regard to their achievement fall even further behind their classmates, and those who do not drop out usually finish school without acquiring the knowledge and skills expected of a high school graduate. The costs of social promotion extend far beyond individual students, since these young people will leave school unprepared for rewarding employment or higher education, and will be seriously hampered in their efforts to make a productive contribution to society.

States, districts, and schools must take the bold steps necessary to end social promotion by setting high standards for performance and by holding both schools and students accountable for results. However, if we are to require students to meet high standards and schools to adequately prepare each student, school administrators and educators must know they have alternatives to holding back students who do not meet standards, which can be as detrimental. Otherwise, they may be reluctant to end the practice of social promotion.

This guide shows that there are promising strategies for preventing academic failure and for intervening when students need extra assistance to meet high expectations. It documents how schools, school districts, and states can put in place high standards and promote academic success; how schools can prevent, and intervene to reduce, student failure; and how these strategies can be sustained through ongoing support for improvement. It documents how parent involvement and community support strengthen student achievement. The guide concludes with an inventory of resources available to help states, districts, and schools end social promotion.

Social promotion is an unacceptable response to the concern we all feel about the problem of low achievement in our nation's schools. The U.S. Department of Education is committed to helping end social promotion by working with states, districts, and schools to devise effective alternatives. Truly embracing the idea that all children can learn -- and making sure that all children do -- requires that we all take responsibility for ending social promotion and help all students meet high expectations for learning.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Riley

Richard W. Riley

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

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Executive Summary

Working to ensure that all students have the best chance to achieve high standards of learning demands that educators and state and local leaders take responsibility for giving students the opportunity to meet high expectations and for ending the practice of social promotion--where students are allowed to continue to pass through school with their peers without satisfying academic requirements or meeting performance goals at key grades. In his 1999 State of the Union address, President Clinton called for an end to social promotion. In order to help educators and state and local leaders meet that challenge, the President directed the U.S. Department of Education to draw on lessons from research and practice to prepare this guide on effective approaches to ending social promotion.

While the practice of passing along students who are unprepared is often hidden, there are indications that the problem is prevalent in many of our nation's schools. More than half of teachers surveyed in a recent poll stated that they had promoted unprepared students in the last school year, often because they see no alternative. Research indicates that from 10 to 15 percent of young adults who graduate from high school and have not gone further--up to 340,000 high school graduates each year--cannot balance a checkbook or write a letter to a credit card company to explain an error on a bill. If one examines national assessments of student performance, upwards of a third of students score below the basic level of proficiency. At the same time, analysis of the 1996 Current Population Statistics indicates that only about 3 percent of students are two or more years over age for their grade (a good indication that they have been retained at least once).

The issue of ending social promotion has too often been posed as a debate over the relative benefits and disadvantages of promotion versus repeating a grade (retention). Yet we know that neither strategy is appropriate for students who are not meeting high academic standards. Students who are promoted without regard to their achievement tend to fall even further behind their classmates as they move through school, and those who do not drop out usually finish without having the knowledge and skills expected of high school graduates. At the same time, research shows that holding students back to repeat a grade without changing instructional strategies is ineffective. The achievement of retained students, after repeating a grade, still lags behind the achievement of their peers, and retention also greatly increases the likelihood that a student will drop out of school. Being held back twice makes dropping out a virtual certainty. Retention disproportionately affects minority and economically disadvantaged students.

To pass students along in school when they are unprepared or retain them without addressing their needs denies students access to opportunities at the next level of schooling, in postsecondary education, and in the workplace. Both policies send a message to students that little is expected from them, that they have little worth, and that they do not warrant the time and effort it would take to help them be successful in school. The cost of these policies extends beyond individual students to society as a whole. Employers have little confidence in a high school diploma as proof that graduates are prepared with the requisite skills. Colleges and

businesses spend resources providing remedial training for students and employees. Lack of education and skills is highly associated with poverty, crime, and violence among youth and young adults.

With pressure increasing to hold students accountable for performance and to end social promotion, and research pointing to negative findings related to retention, educators may feel they have few choices. The results of both policies are unacceptably high dropout rates, especially for poor and minority students, and inadequate knowledge and skills for students. Neither practice closes the learning gap for low-achieving students, and neither practice is an appropriate response to the academic needs of students who have not mastered required coursework.

This policy guide offers better options to social promotion and retention by focusing on interventions to help all students meet high expectations. While raising our awareness of the important need for students to meet performance requirements at key grades, ending social promotion is not a stand-alone policy that can be imposed on students. Taking responsibility for ending social promotion requires a comprehensive effort involving all stakeholders to addresses multiple problems and a variety of student needs.

It starts with setting high standards and making them count by holding schools accountable for preparing students to meet the standards. A comprehensive approach to ending social promotion requires early identification of student needs, research-based strategies for improving learning, and timely intervention for students who need extra assistance to meet standards. It demands that all classrooms have well-prepared teachers and high-quality curricula. It calls for increased

Strategies for Ending Social Promotion

Comprehensive approaches to ending social promotion require leadership, resources, and community support to:

- Set clear objectives for students to meet performance standards at key grades.
- Identify student needs early in order to apply appropriate instructional strategies.
- Emphasize early childhood literacy.
- Focus on providing high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- Provide professional development that deepens teachers' content knowledge and improves instructional strategies to engage all children in learning.
- Set out explicit expectations for all stakeholders, including families and communities, in efforts to help end social promotion.
- Provide summer school for students who are not meeting high academic standards.
- Extend learning time through before- and after-school programs, tutoring, homework centers, and year-round schooling.
- Reduce class sizes in the primary grades.
- Keep students and teachers together for more than one year and use other effective student grouping practices.
- Develop transitional and dropout prevention programs for middle and high school students.
- Hold schools accountable by publicly reporting school performance, rewarding school improvement, and intervening in low-performing schools.

family involvement at home and in the school, and it calls for greater community support of educational activities.

The guide shows how states and districts can set a policy context for high expectations and success, how schools can prevent and intervene to reduce school failure, and how these strategies can be sustained through ongoing support for school improvement. The guide concludes with an inventory of federal resources available to help states, districts, and schools end social promotion.

Taking Responsibility

There is widespread agreement among the public that schools need to set higher standards than now exist for what students should know and be able to do to be promoted. The first step in taking responsibility for ending social promotion requires states and districts to develop clear and challenging standards for all students. There must be clear objectives for students to meet performance standards at key grades (e.g., every child should be able to read well and independently by the end of the third grade).

States and districts also need to set explicit policies about the promotion of students and must take responsibility for making sure that students receive the help they need to meet the requirements -- including providing the necessary resources for schools to help students, and intervening in schools that fail to provide students with the skills they need to succeed. Districts such as Chicago, Tacoma (Washington), Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Corpus Christi (Texas), and New York City, and states such as Delaware, Florida, South Carolina, Texas, and Oregon have stepped up their efforts to improve student achievement by adopting policies to end social promotion and providing support and assistance to students who are unprepared for the next grade.

Assessment is an important issue in efforts to end social promotion. Schools must be able to accurately measure student progress toward achieving performance standards, but education leaders must take care when deciding how assessments are used to influence student promotion decisions. There must be adequate educational justification for the use of the tests, evidence of validity and reliability for the populations tested, adequate prior notice to parents, and adequate opportunity for students to become familiar with the curriculum being tested. States, districts, and schools should not rely upon one assessment as the sole measure for making educationally sound promotion decisions. Rather, a rich variety of measures of student progress are central to making student promotion decisions and diagnosing problems early.

High standards, clear policies, and high-quality assessments are the starting point from which other practices must be developed and aligned. Schools must concentrate on providing high-quality curriculum and instruction aligned with high standards and get all stakeholders--including family and community members--involved in helping all students reach high standards.

Starting Early

To prepare students to meet high standards we must start early. By having a range of positive early learning experiences, young children broaden their knowledge and develop their skills. Early childhood education can help educators identify children possibly at risk of school failure and take steps to ensure their readiness for school and successful learning in the early grades.

Starting early is particularly important to help students develop literacy skills. Reading must be introduced to children at a very young age, integrated into preschool activities, and reinforced at home. Across the nation, educators are recognizing the significance of early intervention. Chicago's "Cradle to Classroom" program works with 700 young mothers each year to give them the skills they need to stimulate their children's minds as well as to care for them physically, emotionally, and socially. The city's "Parents as Teachers" program trains parents to visit the homes of 1,500 preschoolers to help them develop preliteracy skills. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg the district has directed the great majority of its Title I funds toward its "Bright Beginnings" prekindergarten program. In collaboration with Head Start, the program gives four-year-old children a literary-rich, full day prekindergarten experience.

Strengthening Learning Opportunities in the Classroom

If students are to be held more accountable for their academic performance and made to accept consequences for not meeting standards at key grades, schools must provide adequate opportunities for students to meet expectations on time. Educators must use data effectively to identify at-risk students before they fall too far behind. They must ensure that all students have access to good teachers by recruiting qualified teachers, providing teachers with high-quality professional development opportunities, establishing mentoring and networking relationships among teachers, and providing incentives for good teachers to work in the most needy schools.

Educators and leaders also must take advantage of research-based practices to enhance student achievement; these include flexible student grouping, keeping teachers and students together for more than one year (looping), cooperative learning, tutoring, and reducing class size. Schools must also strengthen learning opportunities for students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, and students with disabilities by providing them with appropriate educational services and accommodating their unique needs. This guide highlights examples of transitional programs for non-English speaking immigrants and distance learning projects for migrant students.

Along with ending the practice of social promotion we must provide extra help for children after school and in the summer so that we don't just identify children as failures, but instead say, we're going to give you more help until you succeed.

--President Clinton, July 1998

Extending Learning Time

Programs that extend learning time--such as summer school, after-school programs, and year-round schooling--can help prepare students academically and developmentally to move to the next grade. Mandatory summer school is a central feature of efforts to end social promotion in Chicago, New Haven, Boston, and Washington D.C. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, for example, enables schools to provide expanded learning opportunities for children after school, on weekends, and during the summer in a safe, drug-free, and supervised environment. The centers offer homework assistance, intensive tutoring in basic skills, counseling to prevent drug use and violence, and enrichment in core academic subjects, as well as opportunities to participate in recreational activities, the arts, technology education programs, and services for children and youth with disabilities. The centers are supported through school-community partnerships that include public and nonprofit agencies and organizations, local businesses, and educational entities.

Helping Students Who Still Do Not Meet Standards

For students who still have difficulty meeting standards despite prevention and early intervention efforts, *repeating* a grade with the same instruction over again has been found to be ineffective. These students need alternatives that help them develop the skills they need to achieve. But intervention services usually diminish in the upper grades, just as these students face tough challenges and peer pressure that can seriously affect their academic lives. Establishing effective high school transition and dropout prevention programs can help. For example, Long Beach (CA) Unified School District assigns eighth-graders who fail two or more classes to the Long Beach Preparatory Academy, a year-long alternative program that has smaller classes than regular ninth-grade classes. Counselors work closely with students and their families. In the program's first year of operation, almost 90 percent of participants earned promotion to the ninth grade.

Holding Schools Accountable for Performance and Helping Them Improve

Ending social promotion requires real accountability for results, and this accountability must begin with the schools. Many states and districts have taken steps to hold schools more accountable for student performance. Thirty-two states publish annual school report cards. Some states distribute the report cards to parents, and the contents of the reports often are published by local newspapers. State, district, and school leaders alike claim that this form of public accountability can be a motivating force in school improvement efforts. To take responsibility for ending social promotion also means that states and districts must intervene to improve schools that are failing, as well as reward schools that do make significant progress in helping all students meet performance standards.

President Clinton and the U.S. Department of Education are committed to helping to end social promotion. This guide concludes with an inventory of resources from the U.S. Department of Education to help states, districts, and schools in the effort. The inventory starting on page 58 describes federal programs and assistance available and lists helpful documents.

Recent Legislation to Expand Learning Opportunities

National Class Size Reduction Initiative: In October 1998 President Clinton signed into law legislation that will provide $1.2 billion to districts to recruit, hire, and train teachers and help reduce class sizes, particularly in the early grades.

Reading Excellence Act: Two years ago President Clinton issued a challenge to help all children be able to read well and independently by the end of third grade. In 1998, the President signed legislation that will provide $260 million to help more than 500,000 children to develop literacy skills.

GEAR UP: This new competitive-grant program provides $120 million to support mentoring, tutoring, enrichment programs, and other activities designed to increase awareness and college-going rates among low-income students.

Expansion of **21st Century Community Learning Centers**: $200 million in 1999 will help expand learning opportunities for an additional 250,000 children in a supervised, safe, and drug-free environment. The program has established a priority for projects designed to assist students in meeting or exceeding state or local performance standards in core academic subjects.

Taking responsibility for ending social promotion involves holding firm to the commitment to help all students reach high standards. It requires that schools and students be held accountable for performance. It requires a focused use of resources. And it demands leadership and a sense of collective responsibility that can only develop when expectations and consequences are clearly communicated within the schools and with parents and the community. Truly embracing the idea that all children can learn--and making sure that all children do--requires that we all take responsibility for ending social promotion.

Presidential Directive

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
February 23, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUBJECT: Helping Schools End Social Promotions

The linchpin of our efforts to strengthen public education has been to raise standards and expectations for all students. As a result of state and local efforts, and with the support of Goals 2000 and other federal education programs, students in every state in the country are beginning to benefit from higher academic standards and a more challenging curriculum.

If our efforts to promote higher standards are to lead to increased student achievement, the standards must count. Students must be required to meet them, and schools must adequately prepare each student to do so.

At present, standards don't count for much. Students are often passed from grade to grade regardless of whether they have mastered required material and are academically prepared to do the work at the next level. This practice is called social promotion. For many students, the ultimate consequence is that they fall further and further behind, and leave school ill equipped for college and lacking the skills needed for employment. This situation is unacceptable for students, teachers, employers, and taxpayers.

That is why I have repeatedly challenged states and school districts to end social promotions--to require students to meet rigorous academic standards at key transition points in their schooling, and to end the practice of promoting students without regard to how much they have learned. As every parent knows, students must earn promotion through effort and achievement, not simply by accumulating time in school.

Especially in the early grades, students must acquire a solid foundation in reading in order to learn other subjects in higher grades. Students should not be promoted past the fourth grade if they cannot read independently and well, and they should not enter high school without a solid foundation in math. They should get the help they need to meet the standards before moving on.

Neither promoting students when they are unprepared nor simply retaining them in the same grade is the right response to low student achievement. Both approaches presume that high rates of initial failure are inevitable and acceptable. Ending social promotions by simply holding more students back is the wrong choice. Students who are required to repeat a year are more likely than other students to eventually drop out, and few catch up academically with their peers. The right approach is to ensure that more students are prepared to meet challenging academic standards in the first place.

Schools must implement those proven practices that will prepare students to meet rigorous standards the first time. Schools must provide smaller classes, especially for the most disadvantaged students. Schools must be staffed with well-prepared teachers. Schools should use specific grade-by-grade standards and a challenging curriculum aligned with those standards. Schools must identify those students who need extra help early on, and provide it immediately. There must be after-school and summer school programs for students who need them. The entire school staff must be accountable for results, and must work together as a team to achieve good results for every child. If steps such as these are taken in every school as part of an overall effort to require students to meet academic standards, we would see a dramatic rise in student achievement and a decline in student retention rates. My Administration must help states, school districts, and schools take these steps.

A growing number of states and school districts are working to end social promotion. A recent study by the American Federation of Teachers shows that seven states now require school districts and schools to use state standards and assessments to determine whether students can be promoted at key grades. We must encourage more states to take this step.

Chicago also has ended social promotions, and has instituted a program that provides after-school programs for students who need extra help and mandatory summer school for students who do not meet promotion standards. In Cincinnati, student promotion is now based on specific standards that define what students must know and be able to do. The standards are designed to prepare students to pass the state's ninth-grade proficiency test.

As more states and localities move to end social promotions, we must help them design and implement approaches that will succeed. Therefore, I am directing you to take the following actions:

1. *Produce and widely disseminate guidelines for educators and policymakers on effective approaches to ending social promotions.* Drawing on the lessons from research and practice, these guidelines should give educators and policymakers practical advice on how to design and implement policies that require students to meet academic standards at key transition points before being promoted. The guidelines should help schools:

- Implement strategies designed to prepare all students to meet the standards on time;
- End the use of remedial strategies that have been shown to be ineffective;
- Provide students who do not meet the standards with immediate and effective extra help, such as after-school tutoring programs and summer school, so that they can be promoted on time;
- Implement effective interventions for students who must be retained; and
- Make appropriate use of tests and other indicators of academic performance in determining whether students should be promoted.

2. *Help states and school districts use federal education resources to implement effective practices.* The Department of Education should develop a plan to inform states, school districts, and schools about Department of Education programs and resources, such as Title I, Goals 2000, the 21st Century Schools Program, the Comprehensive School Reform Program, and others, that can be used to implement the recommendations in the guidelines just described.

Together, these initiatives can help ensure that our students receive a solid foundation in the basic skills of reading and math, and master advanced subject matter as well. They can help improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools, and ensure that students who need extra help get it without delay. They can help strengthen our public schools by raising standards, raising expectations, and restoring accountability.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Introduction

Working to give students the opportunity to reach high standards of learning demands that educators and state and local leaders take responsibility for ending the practice of social promotion--where students are allowed to continue to pass through school with their peers without satisfying academic requirements or meeting performance indicators at key grades.

Research indicates, and common sense confirms, that passing students on to the next grade when they are unprepared neither increases student achievement nor properly prepares students for college and future employment.[1] At the same time, research also shows that holding students back to repeat a grade (retention) without changing instructional strategies is ineffective. Much evidence suggests that the achievement of retained students still lags behind that of their peers after repeating a grade, making it an ineffective strategy for enabling students to catch up.[1] Retention in grade also greatly increases the likelihood that a student will drop out of school--and being held back twice makes dropping out a virtual certainty.

Students who are promoted without regard to their achievement or are retained often fall even further behind their classmates, and those who do not drop out usually finish school without the knowledge and skills expected of a high school graduate. Both being promoted without regard to effort or achievement or retained without extra assistance sends a message to students that little is expected from them, that they have little worth, and that they do not warrant the time and effort it would take to help them be successful in school.

Although it sounds appealing to suggest that all students must receive an equal and challenging education, many school leaders struggle with the question of what to do about students who do not make the grade and are unable to meet the requirements set for them. Some question whether all students are really capable of meeting high standards. Others are concerned that holding all students accountable for achievement is unfair when the system does not give all students equal access to a high-quality educational experience. There are ongoing challenges about the use of assessments to make important educational decisions.

> *Neither social promotion nor holding kids back without help is a successful strategy for improving learning.*
>
> **—Sandra Feldman, American Federation of Teachers**

With pressure increasing to hold students accountable for performance and to end social promotion, and research pointing to negative findings related to retention, educators often feel they have few choices. Many are reluctant to end the practice of social promotion because they believe that the only alternative for students who do not meet performance standards is to repeat a grade.

This guide holds that the issue of ending social promotion has too often been posed as a debate over the relative benefits and disadvantages of promotion versus retention. The results of both policies are unacceptably high dropout rates, especially for poor and minority students, and inadequate knowledge and skills for students. Neither practice closes the learning gap for low-achieving students, and neither practice is an appropriate response to the academic needs of students experiencing difficulty mastering required coursework.

If we are going to expect more from our students, then our leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members need to expect more of themselves. Taking responsibility for ending social promotion requires tough decisions and strong actions by states, districts, and schools. It means requiring students to meet performance standards in key subject areas, at key transition points, in order to advance to the next grade level. It involves setting clear expectations for students and explicit policies for promotion, and adopting measures to hold all stakeholders accountable for student performance.

To truly embrace the idea that *all* children can learn to high standards requires that every student has the chance to learn the content and the best possible opportunity to achieve to high standards. It requires a comprehensive approach to ending social promotion that begins early with opportunities for preschool and early childhood learning; strengthens teaching by providing high-quality curriculum, instruction, and teacher preparation; identifies students who need extra help early and accommodates students with special needs; and provides additional learning time. It also means intervening to help students who, despite these efforts, still need help to meet challenging standards. Systemwide, taking responsibility for ending social promotion means holding schools publicly accountable for delivering the kind of education students need to reach standards, rewarding schools when they do deliver, and helping low-performing schools improve. Throughout, parents need to remain actively involved in their children's education at home and at school.

What is social promotion?

Social promotion is generally understood to be the practice of allowing students who have failed to meet performance standards and academic requirements to pass on to the next grade with their peers instead of completing or satisfying the requirements. Promoting students in this way is called social promotion because it is often carried

Why Do Children Have Difficulty in School?

While all children have the capacity to acquire the knowledge and skills required for functioning in school, work, and society, educators must face the following challenges as they develop policies to help underachieving students learn:

- Immaturity or unreadiness for school,
- Lack of a rich curriculum or instructional practices that support high achievement in school,
- Limited English-language skills,
- Excessive absenteeism,
- Ill-conceived theories about children and their learning that sustain low expectations and achievement, and
- Lack of engagement in the education process.

—adapted from American Federation of Teachers

out in the presumed interest of a student's social and psychological well-being, without regard to achievement.

Retention, sometimes viewed as the only alternative to social promotion, is a policy that holds back students who have failing grades at the end of a school year. Retention is most often a policy of *repetition*--students are given an additional year to repeat a grade to go over the same academic content, often taught the same way, that they failed to master the previous year.

How widespread is social promotion?

While social promotion and retention are salient educational issues, it is difficult to estimate the prevalence of the practices. Some states do not collect retention information at all and many others collect only limited data. Retention rates vary widely and it is difficult to interpret and compare the data.[2] Social promotion remains a hidden problem. Few are willing to admit the extent to which social promotion takes place, much less keep track of it.

> *Is there another alternative? Can't you intervene before retention, and can't you extend time periods so that you spend more time with these children? Does retention have to be your only option?*
>
> **—Houston teacher**

Still, a variety of indicators suggest that social promotion is a serious problem facing our public education system.

- A majority of the teachers surveyed in a recent poll indicated that they had promoted unprepared students in the past year.[3]

- Research indicates that from 10 to 15 percent of young adults who graduate from high school and have not gone further--up to 340,000 high school graduates each year--cannot balance a checkbook or write a letter to a credit card company to explain an error on a bill.[4]

- If one looks at national assessments of student performance, upwards of a third of students score below the basic level of proficiency. For example, mathematics results from the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for students in grades 4, 8, and 12 show that between 32 to 40 percent of public school students in the nation failed to meet the "basic" standard. At the same time, analysis of the 1996 Current Population Statistics indicates that only about 3 percent of students are two or more years over age for their grade (an indication that they have been retained at least once).[5]

- The California State University system, for example, reported that in 1998, 54 percent of its incoming freshmen failed to pass an entry level math placement test. Forty-seven percent failed an English placement test.[6]

Research also indicates that retention is a serious problem in our schools. The 3 percent figure cited above is a very conservative estimate. A recent study tracing a cohort of children from 1987 to 1996 (and based on the percentage of students who are one, rather than two, years over age for their grade) estimated that 21 percent of students were enrolled below grade level at ages 6 to 8. By the time the students were 12 to 14 years old, 31 percent were below grade level for their age.[7] Data from the Child Health Survey and National Household Education Survey suggest that by first grade 7 to 10 percent of students have been retained.[8]

Of particular concern is the fact that across all of these measures grade retention varies substantially by family income and parent education. Using more conservative estimates (based only on students who are *two or more* years over age for their grade), in low-income families and families in which the parents have less than a high school education, almost 7 percent of students are at least two years older than their classmates, whereas in higher-income families less than 2 percent of students are two or more years over age. Retention also is more than twice as likely among boys as among girls, and more than twice as prevalent among African American students as among white students. Across all age groups, 2.6 percent of white students, 3.8 percent of Hispanic students, and 5.9 percent of African American students are two or more years over the expected age for their grade. [9]

The impact of social promotion is evident from survey research on confidence in the credentials of today's high school graduates. According to *Public Agenda*, 63 percent of employers, 32 percent of parents, and 26 percent of teachers do not believe a high school diploma is a guarantee that students have mastered the basics.[10]

	PARENTS	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	EMPLOYERS
Which statement is more accurate for the students graduating from your high school:				
1. A high school diploma is not a guarantee that the typical student has learned the basics; or	32%	22%	26%	63%
2. A high school diploma means that the typical student has at least learned the basics?	62%	77%	73%	35%

Source: Public Agenda, 1998.

As mentioned above, survey research also indicates that teachers are socially promoting students. Although most teachers agree that promoting students who are unprepared creates a burden for teachers and classmates, lowers standards, and impedes the education of all students, in a recent poll, *more than half* reported that they had promoted unprepared students in the past year. The reasons teachers gave for passing students along even when they are unprepared included the following:

- **Teachers feel under pressure to promote students**. Out of fear that high failure rates reflect poorly on schools and administrators, teachers sometimes yield to pressure from principals and parents to promote unprepared students. Sixty percent of teachers surveyed report pressure from principals and other administrators to promote students, and 52 percent report parental pressure to promote students. As one Houston teacher explained in a recent focus group on ending social promotion, "Administrators just basically come down and tell the teachers, 'Look, we can't have a high failure rate because it makes me look bad. And if I look bad, you look bad.'"[11]

- **Teachers know that educational research indicates that retention can be ineffective**, if not harmful, but many feel that there are insufficient educational alternatives to social promotion or retention for students who do not master the grade-level material.[12]

> *Let's ensure that students are learning the basics, and let's guarantee that a high school diploma means what it ought to mean...We must stop promoting students who haven't learned and we must stop graduating students who aren't ready...What is right is to identify the students who need help, figure out what they need and focus on giving them the help they need.*
>
> **-Governor James Hunt, North Carolina**

Concern about social promotion is becoming more evident in the policy priorities of public officials as well. According to the American Federation of Teachers, 10 states have established statewide policies for ending social promotion.[13] In their 1999 State of the State addresses, numerous governors called for an end to social promotion in their schools. States such as California, Delaware, South Carolina, and Wisconsin recently passed laws to curtail social promotion by tying promotion policies to state content and student performance standards.

What are the costs to students and society?

Decades of research indicate that *both* retention and social promotion, if not accompanied by effective programmatic intervention, fail to provide long-term benefits for low-performing students. The practices of retention and social promotion were being questioned in the research literature as early as the 1940s, and hundreds of independent studies and research reviews since then have added to the body of negative findings. This research indicates that neither practice, as typically implemented, improves failing students' chances for educational success.

The costs of social promotion to students are high. To move students from grade to grade without attention to their skills is an unacceptable practice. It frustrates students who cannot do the work expected, and it sends a message to students that little is expected of them. As a result, students fail to grasp the importance of working to achieve academic goals and learn they can get by without working hard.[14] Students who are socially promoted are likely to graduate, if they graduate at all, unprepared for work and for the future.

Chicago's Rationale for Ending Social Promotion

- Success in any phase of the curriculum depends on mastery of prerequisite skills taught in the preceding grades.
- Students entering high school with inadequate skills are unable to make the adjustments required for academic success; this situation has resulted in a large number of failures in ninth and tenth grades and a high dropout rate.
- Social promotion depreciates the value of the eighth-grade and high school diplomas in the Chicago Public School system.
- By rewarding students who have not achieved acceptable standards of performance, social promotion diminishes the effects of individual student motivation.
- Social promotion can give parents and students a false sense of accomplishment, which can have detrimental consequences in later life.

—Chicago Public Schools

But research shows that retention also has serious negative effects on students. Students retained and retaught the same material using the same instructional practices usually do not catch up to their peers. The National Association of School Psychologists has reported that retained children tend to have low self-esteem, get into trouble, and dislike school. Retention can be a particularly traumatic experience for children who view it as punishment and a highly stressful event.[15] As with students who are socially promoted, often students who repeat a grade are treated as "lost causes." Teachers assume that the retained students have limited potential and thus have low expectations of them.

The costs of failing to help students meet academic expectations extend beyond individual students to society as a whole. Social promotion has been pointed to as one of the main reasons why many colleges and businesses must spend time and money giving high school graduates remedial training in such basics as reading. A recent study by the Brookings Institution estimates that the total cost of providing remedial instruction to incoming freshmen nationwide is about $1 billion. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, about one in three incoming college freshmen in 1996 had to take a remedial class in math, reading, or writing.

Policies to end social promotion must be accompanied by a recognition that it will take much effort and many resources to help those students who do not meet standards; Boston's efforts to end social promotion are expected to cost $5 million annually.[16] Chicago anticipates that it will cost $63 million to provide summer school assistance to over 80,000 students in 1999.

But failure to take responsibility for the education of all children in our society, including failure to provide opportunity to underachieving students, holds potentially even greater costs to society. Low self-esteem, lack of education, and school failure are highly associated with poverty, crime, and violence among youth and young adults.

The policy options available to educators and state and local leaders are not simply social promotion or retention. The following sections of this guide offer better options for educators and state and local leaders, including a variety of promising strategies to prevent academic failure and intervene when students need extra assistance to meet high standards.

The first section describes how states, districts, and schools can set a policy context for academic success by taking responsibility for setting explicit promotion policies and raising standards. It also highlights the importance of concentrating on providing high-quality curriculum and instruction to all students, as well as the importance of including families and community stakeholders among those who must take responsibility for helping students meet expectations.

The next section emphasizes that schools must start early to prevent academic failure by offering preschool and early literacy opportunities. The guide then turns to strategies for strengthening learning opportunities in the classroom by identifying and intervening early for at-risk students, ensuring that there is a well-prepared teacher in every classroom, using research-based practices, reducing class size, and accommodating students with special needs.

Strategies for Ending Social Promotion

Comprehensive approaches to ending social promotion require leadership, resources, and community support to:

- Set clear objectives for students to meet performance standards at key grades.
- Identify student needs early in order to apply appropriate instructional strategies.
- Emphasize early childhood literacy.
- Focus on providing high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- Provide professional development that deepens teachers' content knowledge and improves instructional strategies to engage all children in learning.
- Set out explicit expectations for all stakeholders, including families and communities, in efforts to help end social promotion.
- Provide summer school for students who are not meeting high academic standards.
- Extend learning time through before- and after-school programs, tutoring, homework centers, and year-round schooling.
- Reduce class sizes in the primary grades.
- Keep students and teachers together for more than one year and use other effective student grouping practices.
- Develop transitional and dropout prevention programs.
- Hold schools accountable for performance by publicly reporting school performance, rewarding school improvement, and intervening in low-performing schools.

The guide also examines strategies--such as summer school, after-school programs, and year round schooling--for extending learning time to help students who, despite prevention and early intervention efforts, still need alternatives that help them develop the skills they need to achieve.

Finally, the guide addresses the issue of school accountability. Ending social promotion demands leadership, and a sense of collective responsibility that can only develop when expectations and consequences are clearly communicated within schools and with parents and the community. The guide concludes with an inventory of federal resources available to help states, districts, and schools end social promotion.

If you are just going to pass students on to the next grade, you are dooming them to failure.

—a Philadelphia teacher

Taking Responsibility

Ending social promotion requires that all stakeholders--from state, district, school, and community leaders to teachers, parents, and students themselves--take responsibility for student performance and the quality of education children receive. This section discusses some important steps in setting a policy context for ending social promotion, including: setting high standards and expectations for learning for all students, creating reliable measures of student achievement against standards, including all stakeholders in the process of improving student performance, and concentrating on providing high-quality curriculum and instruction for all students.

Making Standards Matter (1995-98)

	1995	1996	1997	1998
States with policies for ending social promotion				10
States with promotion policies based on achievement toward state standards	n/a	3	7	7
States with exit exams aligned to tenth-grade standards or higher	7	13	13	13
States with incentives for students to reach higher standards	n/a	8	16	20
States with interventions for students who have difficulty meeting standards	n/a	10	13	20

Source: American Federation of Teachers, 1998.

In a recent survey by the Department of Education, 86 percent of districts report that they have a written policy on student promotion and retention. Another survey of the 85 largest school districts in the nation, conducted by the American Federation of Teachers, revealed that more than 90 percent of the districts surveyed reported having formal, written school board policies on retention and promotion. At the same time, the report notes that although no district policy explicitly endorses social promotion, many districts maintain restrictions on retaining students. Forty percent of the districts surveyed have explicit limitations on the number of times a student can be retained. More than 30 percent of districts have mandatory age limits for students in certain grades.[17]

But states and districts across the nation are beginning to set clearer policies about the promotion and retention of students. These policies are increasingly explicit, not only about the standards by which promotion decisions are made, but also about the help that students must receive to meet the standards. In 1998, of the 10 states had explicit policies for ending social promotion, 7 based their promotion policies on achievement of state standards. Twenty-four states had high school exit exams based on state standards, and 13 aligned their exit exams to tenth-grade standards or higher.[18] Twenty states funded academic intervention programs for students who are struggling to meet standards.[19]

Recently, Chicago, Tacoma (Washington), Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and New York City, and states such as Florida, Texas, and Oregon, stepped up their efforts to end social promotion. For example, Cincinnati has established standards at three grade levels (3, 6, 8) that students must meet to be promoted. Students must demonstrate proficiency in reading, math, science, and social studies in portfolios of their best work completed in grades K-3, 4-6, and 7-8. Students who do not meet promotion standards participate in "Plus." Plus classrooms at grades 3, 6, 8 serve smaller groups of students and focus on helping students meet the standards. Satisfactory attainment of the eighth-grade standards means that students should be ready to pass the Ohio ninth-grade proficiency test.

As part of its Children First Education Plan, Chicago officials have mandated that students in key transition grades (3, 6, 8, and 9) who fail to meet standards on the district assessment must participate in a seven-week Summer Bridge program and pass the district assessment before moving on to the next grade.

New York City has adopted the New Standards, developed by the National Center for Education and the Economy, for language arts, mathematics, science, and applied learning. The district is making efforts to ensure that all assessments are aligned with the standards and that assessment results guide instruction and are used to hold schools and students accountable for performance. New York City's new promotion standards for grades 4, 7, and

Setting Expectations: Highlights from Boston's Policy to End Social Promotion

- Beginning in summer 1999, summer school is available for students who have not met promotion requirements by the end of grades 2, 5, and 8.
- Students in grades 5 and 8 who have already been retained one year and who do not meet promotion requirements to grades 6 and 9 must attend a special transition program to boost skills.
- Students can have only three unexcused absences per marking period or they will receive no credit or fail, unless they pass the final exam for the course.
- Starting with the class of 2002, all high school students must take and pass advanced algebra.

-Boston Public Schools

12, proposed for 2000, will rest upon a combination of criteria including citywide assessments, grades, portfolios of student work, and attendance. An early warning systems for parents and early intervention strategies are critical components of the plan. Statewide, students in New York will be required to earn a challenging "regent's diploma" in order to graduate. Some research is showing that high school exit exams such as the New York State Regents have a positive effect on student achievement.[20]

State Promotion Policies

California: Assembly Bills 1626 and 1639, signed into law in September 1998, require districts to retain in grade students who do not meet certain performance criteria, and to provide funding for summer remediation programs for those students. Each school board must establish promotion standards for students in grades 2, 3, and 4, and for promotion to both middle school and high school. The promotion standards are based on students' performance either on the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program or the students' grades and other indicators of academic achievement. For students in grades 2 and 3, districts must establish promotion standards only in reading; in the other grades, districts must set standards in reading, language arts, and math. Districts must make summer remediation programs available to retained students--and may compel them to attend.

Colorado: The Colorado Basic Literacy Act of 1996 mandates that schools must develop an individual literacy plan for each student who is not proficient or at grade level on the state's third-grade reading assessment and on other indicators of student achievement. Students may still be promoted to the fourth grade with their peers, but reading instruction is adapted to their individual levels. Individual literacy plans must also include a home reading program. Many of the individual literacy plans call for the students to attend summer school and tutoring sessions to improve their reading skills.

Ohio: Senate Bill 55, signed by the governor in 1997, prohibits all school districts from promoting any fourth grader who fails to show proficiency on the state's reading test unless the student was exempted because of a disability or unless both the reading teacher and principal agree that the student is academically prepared for grade 5. Districts must annually assess students in grades 1-3 to identify those students below grade level. Students reading below grade level in grades 1 and 2 must be offered intervention; districts must offer intense summer remediation for third grade students identified as reading below grade level. Beginning in the fall of 2001, fourth graders will have three opportunities to take the reading test. Beginning in summer 1999, districts must offer summer remediation to students below proficient on three or more subject area proficiency tests. Ohio's proficiency tests cover the areas of writing, reading, mathematics, citizenship, and science.

Efforts to hold students accountable for meeting standards may be a motivating force for student as well. Results from a recent Public Agenda poll indicate that 68 percent of students in schools with high school exit exams said that the tests made them work harder in school. [21]

Set high standards of learning for all students

The process of making decisions about whether or not to promote students to the next grade still varies widely across the country, with teacher assessments serving as the most frequent tool for decision making. Unfortunately, some research suggests that teachers often make those decisions in the context of different expectations for different students, and sometimes lower expectations for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, a 1994 U.S. Department of Education study found that when student grades were compared with performance on external reading and math exams, there were large disparities in achievement. The report found that an acceptable level of performance in a high-poverty school would be considered failing in more affluent schools.[22]

Real World Academic Standards and Ending Social Promotion Corpus Christi, Texas

Many school districts across the nation have developed their own high standards for student achievement. In pursuit of its mission--that all students will achieve their full educational potential and be challenged to excel academically--the Corpus Christi Independent School District has developed "Real World Academic Standards," which are more challenging than the state standards and are tied to the district's efforts to end social promotion. The district's standards explain what students at every level, from prekindergarten through high school graduation, are expected to know. The standards set expectations for academic achievement, student conduct, promotion, and retention. The standards are designed to help teachers, students, and parents understand what is expected of students academically and to ensure that they are prepared to move forward. The district issues individual report cards that show each student's progress toward meeting each specific standard.

Students are given multiple opportunities to meet standards and extra assistance if they have trouble. Tutoring is required and, while not mandatory, summer school is strongly recommended. Each school's campus action plan must include strategies for addressing the needs of students who are not meeting standards. One school has rearranged the school day to give teachers more time to work intensively with failing students. Other schools have taken advantage of community resources by having personnel from nearby military bases provide one-on-one tutoring to students who need assistance.

Students in Corpus Christi have been making significant achievement gains since the district's academic standards were put in place. Between 1994 and 1998 the percent of students achieving at an academically acceptable level on all subject areas on the Texas state assessment rose from 51 percent to 71 percent.

One of the first steps, then, in taking responsibility for ending social promotion requires states and districts to develop clear and challenging standards for all students. There is widespread agreement among the public (87 percent) that schools need to set higher standards than are now required about what students should know and be able to do to be promoted from grade to grade and to graduate. More than two-thirds of the public and 62 percent of teachers want to raise standards of promotion from grade school to junior high. A majority of the public favors stricter requirements for high school graduation.[23]

Setting Standards of Excellence

The Council of Basic Education's recent guide for parents, teachers, and principals on implementing standards for education features examples of clear and specific standards for what students should know by grade and subject area. Below is an excerpt of expectations for 4th graders in writing.

Students will write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing considers audience and purpose. They successfully use the stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing successive versions).

By the end of grade 4 students should be able to:

- Select a focus, organization, and point of view.
- Create a multiple-paragraph composition.
- Write fluidly and legibly.
- Quote or paraphrase information sources.
- Locate information in reference texts.
- Use various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, card catalog, encyclopedia, on-line resources).
- Understand the structure and organization of (and use) almanacs, newspapers, and periodicals.
- Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills and familiarity with the vocabulary of technology.
- Edit and revise drafts.

- Council of Basic Education, *Standards for Excellence in Education*

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Standards help teachers concentrate on instruction, help parents and students understand what is expected academically, and help ensure that students are prepared for the next grade and beyond. In order to be effective, these standards must be clear, specific, realistic, and integrated into the daily work of teachers in the classroom.

Recent history provides some lessons about the impact of standards on student performance and graduation from school, particularly for at-risk students. In the 1970s states instituted minimum competency tests to ensure that their graduates were leaving school with basic skills. Despite the dire warnings that such testing would lead to higher dropout rates, graduation rates and test scores for minority students actually improved during this period. Not only did students rise to the challenge, but, even more important, school systems upgraded curriculum and instruction in line with the standards to ensure that students were prepared to pass the tests.[24]

As we prepare to enter the 21st century, we are asking more of our students and school systems, yet the same principle applies. Standards can galvanize schools around what is important to teach and what is important to learn. Changing curriculum and instruction to meet more demanding standards of performance poses a monumental challenge, requiring concentrated and sustained effort at all levels of the system.

To help raise the expectations for learning for all students, especially disadvantaged students, the U.S. Department of Education has helped states develop challenging content and student performance standards. Accountability in the largest elementary and secondary program, Title I, is tied to student performance in meeting challenging state standards. Goals 2000 provides grants to help states and districts implement systemic standards-based reform. Almost all states now have content standards in place and are developing challenging student performance standards to measure what students should know and be able to do in key grades throughout their education.

Create reliable measures of student performance against standards

In line with the requirement in Title I for states to adopt challenging state content and student performance standards, states and districts are also required to develop assessments aligned with content and student performance standards that become a basis for school-level accountability measures. The program recognizes that schools must be able to accurately measure student progress toward achieving the standards. States, districts, and schools need to use a variety of assessment instruments to identify students' difficulties early, choose effective intervention strategies, make more consistent decisions about whether a student is ready to be promoted to the next level of instruction, and ultimately hold schools and students more accountable for performance.

These assessments have been welcomed in many states as a means to hold schools more accountable for performance, and in some states, as part of an effort to hold students more accountable and put an end to social promotion. Currently, nearly 40 percent of districts report

that they use a districtwide standardized test as part of making promotion decisions at the elementary school level, 35 percent use them at the middle-school level, and 23 percent at the high school level. At least 32 states and 34 urban districts now have accountability systems that provide rewards or sanctions for schools that are based, at least in part, on state or district assessment results.[25]

Some states have seen dramatic increases in student achievement with the implementation of state assessment and accountability systems. Texas and North Carolina, for example, were recently recognized by the National Education Goals Panel for significant gains in student achievement and success in improving education.

- In **Texas**, schools are rated based on three indicators reflected in the state's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS): student achievement on the reading, math, and writing sections of the state assessment for grades 3, 8, and 10; annual dropout rates for grades 7-12; and attendance rates for grades 1-12. The state has developed four rating levels for schools: exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and low-performing. Since instituting its state assessment and accountability system, Texas has seen a significant decline in the number of low-performing schools in the state and an increase in the number of exemplary schools. The Texas Learning Index shows that the proportion of students passing the state assessment improved from 55 percent in 1994 to 74 percent in 1997. Texas is noteworthy in that its school accountability requires not only that most students meet performance thresholds but that at-risk subgroups in each school meet them as well. Performance results and dropout rates are disaggregated for four student groups: African American, Hispanic, white and economically disadvantaged. Schools must show that they meet the performance targets overall and for student subgroups. The greatest recent improvements registered on the Texas state assessment have been among African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students--students traditionally at the highest risk of school failure.

- **North Carolina's** "ABCs of Public Education" is a school accountability system that relies on an expected growth composite based on three factors: statewide average academic growth, the previous performance of students in the school, and a statistical adjustment that is used when comparing the student performance from one year to the next. Schools are categorized according to seven recognition categories. In 1997-98, 83 percent of elementary and middle schools in the state met either expected or exemplary growth standards.

These state policies exemplify efforts to enforce school-level accountability for student performance. This accountability is central to ending social promotion; that is, schools must be held responsible for delivering the kind of high-quality education that students must receive in order to reach high standards.

But when states and school districts use tests to hold *students* accountable and tie assessments to decisions about student promotion, there are a number of important issues to consider. The discussion of high-stakes testing and holding students accountable for performance must be understood in the context of the possible disproportionate effects of promotion and retention policies on low-income and minority children. Disadvantaged children begin school without many of the supports enjoyed by their more advantaged peers. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education, in particular, has pointed out the disproportionate representation of students from racial and ethnic minority groups in special education. Children in poverty are more likely to have disabilities and therefore need special education services to a greater extent than other children. Schools located in communities of concentrated poverty often lack important resources, both financial and social, that are needed for academic success. Although much research shows that access to skilled, effective teachers is an important determinant of student performance, low-income students are often less likely than higher-income students to be taught by skilled teachers.[26]

Policies to end social promotion and raise accountability for student performance demand that difficult issues be faced head on, particularly with regard to high-stakes tests and other student accountability measures. Student promotion decisions should not be based on a single, high-stakes assessment alone. Standardized assessments ensure some degree of consistency in making promotion decisions. But no single assessment tool is sensitive enough to capture all the relevant information related to identifying what the needs of particular students are, how those needs are best addressed, and when difficulties have been adequately overcome. State or district assessments need to be used as one of a variety of indicators. Consideration must also be given to the role of teacher judgment and the inventory of assessments teachers and tutors use every day to monitor the continual progress of students. Leaders must take care when deciding whether, and how, high-stakes tests should be used to make promotion decisions.[27] The federal legal and civil rights principles that educators should be aware of are as follows:

- **Adequate educational justification**. There must be an adequate educational justification for the use of a test for high-stakes purpose. Establishing "qualitative achievement standards" and encouraging academic achievement are examples of adequate educational justifications for using a statewide or districtwide test to determine student promotion.

- **Professionally acceptable evidence regarding test validity and reliability**. When a statewide or districtwide test is being used to determine student promotion, the state or district must be able to provide professionally acceptable evidence that the test is valid and reliable for the purpose for which it is being used. If a state or district chooses to use a test as a principal criterion for decisions about student promotion, the test must be designed for this use and there must be evidence that it is appropriate to use the test as a sole or principal criterion. When a high-stakes test is designed to measure whether students have learned specific skills or acquired specific knowledge, the test needs to be representative of the knowledge and skills the state or school district intends to measure.

- **Adequate prior notice to students and parents**. When a statewide or districtwide test will have high-stakes consequences, students and parents must receive adequate prior notice that the state or district intends to establish new requirements. The notice must be far enough in advance of the implementation of the requirements to ensure that students have sufficient time and opportunity to learn the material to be tested.

- **Alignment between curriculum standards and the assessment and between the assessment and instruction**. When a state or district establishes curriculum standards that will be the basis for high-stakes statewide or districtwide assessments to measure student achievement, schools have a responsibility to provide instruction in the knowledge and skills being measured by the test. Parents should be informed about how they can help at home and in the schools so that students are well prepared.

- **Consideration for disparate effects on the basis of race, national origin, or gender**. When a statewide or districtwide high-stakes test has a significant impact based on race, national origin, or gender, the use of the test must be educationally necessary. This means that the test must be valid and reliable for the particular purpose used. Even when the test is valid and reliable for the purpose for which it is being used, consideration must be given to whether there are any practicable alternative practices that would effectively measure the knowledge and skills the state or district intends to measure with less adverse impact.

- **Equal educational opportunity for students with limited English proficiency**. Under federal civil rights laws, school districts have an obligation to ensure that students with limited English proficiency (LEP) are provided with a program that enables them to acquire English-language skills and instructs them in the knowledge and skills that all students are required to master. When states or school districts use tests for high-stakes purposes, they must ensure that the tests effectively measure students' knowledge and skills in the particular content area being assessed. Furthermore, the students must be provided "appropriate accommodations" to ensure valid and reliable results. Depending on the nature and purpose of the test and the particular needs of the LEP student, appropriate accommodations may include providing a valid and reliable version of the test in the student's native language, extended time, or the use of bilingual dictionaries. LEP students must be included in statewide or districtwide assessments unless there is a valid educational justification for their exclusion. In situations in which students are excluded from a particular statewide or district assessment, comparable information about these students' academic progress must be collected.

- **Participation of students with disabilities in statewide or districtwide assessments.** Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), school districts have a responsibility to provide students with disabilities with a free appropriate public education. Providing effective instruction in the core curriculum for students with disabilities is an important aspect of this requirement. Under federal law, students with disabilities must be included in the same state and

districtwide assessments of student achievement as nondisabled students, unless the student's individualized education program team (IEP team) determines either that individual modifications in the administration of the assessments need to be provided or that a particular assessment is not appropriate for the student. In these cases the student's IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate and how the student will be assessed. If the IEP team properly makes individualized decisions about the participation of each child with a disability in general state and districtwide assessments, including the use of appropriate accomodations, modifications, and individual modifications in administration, it will be necessary to use alternate assessments for a relatively small percentage of children with disabilities. The IDEA also requires states or local education agencies to develop guidelines for students with disabilities who cannot take part in state and districtwide tests to participate in alternate assessments.

Concentrate on providing high quality curriculum and instruction for all students

We know that if social promotion is to end, all adults must do their part to enable students to meet high standards. The central task of educators is clear--to provide curriculum and instruction that help all students reach challenging academic standards. To accomplish this, schools must concentrate on learning, and states and districts must help move standards into classroom practice.

America Counts

To be prepared for college and promising careers, students need to master advanced skills in mathematics, science, and technology. However, far too many students finish high school without mastering the challenging mathematics necessary for success in higher education and in our competitive, knowledge-based economy. Although U.S. fourth graders perform above the international average and our nation's students successfully acquire basic computation skills, mathematical performance begins to drop in the middle grades, as other nations introduce advanced content while the U.S. curriculum continues to focus on arithmetic.

Students who take algebra and geometry attend college at much higher rates than those who do not, and low-income students who take algebra and geometry are almost three times as likely to go to college as those who do not. Moreover, mathematics teaches ways of thinking that apply in every workplace and are essential for informed civic participation.

The U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation (NSF) have set forth a strategy to improve student achievement in mathematics by focusing on six critical areas: building public awareness, improving professional development in math, encouraging a more challenging math curriculum for all students, using resources effectively to support math instruction, providing extra learning time and help for students who need it, and using research and assessment for continuous improvement. For a complete overview of the Department's math initiatives, visit <http://www.ed.gov/inits/Math> on the web.

Classrooms with high standards are places where expectations are clearly communicated and displayed to students so that all know and understand them. In such classrooms, examples of student work are prominent and teachers make concrete connections between standards and the activities they pursue with their students. A classroom striving to reach high standards does not necessarily specify a certain type of instructional method or pedagogy. Rather, it involves good instruction by teachers who know the content they are teaching, engage students in learning, and challenge them to strive for greater accomplishments.

Effective Schoolwide Programs
City View Elementary School, Worcester, Massachusetts

According to principal Donald Shea, the schoolwide program at City View Elementary School is designed for "all students in our school, so we can use [our federal] funds to benefit all of them." The school enrolls approximately 675 students in grades K-6. Fifty percent of the students are Hispanic, 43 percent are white, 5 percent are African American, and 2 percent are Asian. Approximately 61 percent come from low-income families.

The school focuses on building literacy, experience-based learning, and a safe and nurturing environment. The academic programs, written by teachers to reflect the state curriculum frameworks, encourage students to use reading, writing, and math to approach problems creatively, independently, and cooperatively. Teachers combine several research-based instructional models to support curriculum changes in all content areas, before, during, and after school--and even in the summer. Experienced faculty provide in-class reading, math, and science support and serve as mentors to colleagues. Five teachers serve as part-time reading teachers, and a Spanish-language teacher helps student in the K-6 bilingual program.

Parents participate in planning and daily decision making. The school keeps them informed through notices, newsletters, conferences with teachers, and telephone calls. A parent compact defines school and home responsibilities to promote children's learning.

-from *Implementing Schoolwide Programs: An Ideabook*

Studies of high-achieving schools that serve overwhelmingly disadvantaged children reveal important lessons for schools facing the dual challenge of raising standards and reducing social promotion. Most importantly, schools that have markedly improved student performance have high expectations for achievement and offer challenging and demanding coursework. Consequently, states, districts, and schools must concentrate on high expectations for early literacy, and encourage all students to learn basic and advanced mathematics skills in elementary school, enroll in challenging prerequisite courses early in secondary school, and build on their education in high school with rigorous coursework.

To end social promotion, schools must focus on improving classroom instruction--and direct resources toward that goal. Without attention to this central issue, the other strategies featured in this guide are useless. Ending social promotion requires a comprehensive approach. The effort

to concentrate on learning and improve what happens in the classroom is bolstered by other strategies featured in this guide, such as ensuring that there is a well-prepared teacher in every classroom, reducing class size, extending learning time, and creating programs for students who are not ready for promotion.

Include families

Substantial research shows that educators cannot do their jobs alone. For this reason, families and communities must help reinforce what students learn in school. Schools and students cannot be held accountable for performance outside the context of the efforts of families and communities.

Helping Families Help Children to Learn

- **Parenting workshops** can train parents in child development and ways to support academic learning. Parenting workshops can also cover such topics as nutrition, child abuse, and nurturing and discipline strategies.
- **Parent resource centers** in schools can help draw parents into the school community while providing important information and assistance. Useful resources include videos, aids, and tips on helping their children succeed in core subjects.
- **Family literacy programs** can engage parents lacking education or limited in English in their own learning and that of their children's.
- **Home visits** can be conducted by qualified staff to help parents reinforce their children's learning at home.
- **Parental participation in decision making at school** can be developed by introducing parents to school leaders, committees, and policies and giving parents the information and support they need to join in decision making at the school.
- **Parent-school compacts** can outline the mutual responsibilities of home and school for helping students achieve high standards.
- **Volunteer training** can be conducted to educate parents about volunteer opportunities within the school, rather than simply asking and expecting parents to get involved.
- **Outreach strategies** can keep all parents informed of school activities and policies. Outreach is critical to maintaining an enduring school-parent partnership.
- **Staff training** is necessary to provide teachers, principals, and school staff with strategies on how to work with parents.

Parental involvement in education is critical to academic success. Children whose parents are involved in their education earn higher grades, have higher test scores, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate a better attitude and better behavior, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to go on to higher education than do children whose parents are less involved. The implications for efforts to eliminate social promotion are clear: increasing family involvement in schools will help students to learn so that they are prepared for the next grade and for school success. [28]

Yet despite the value of parental involvement, many parents remain uninvolved. Teachers often complain about the lack of parental involvement at school and assume that such families are indifferent. But often, particularly in low-income communities, parents often feel uncomfortable or intimidated at their children's school. Some parents were low-achieving students themselves, and retain feelings of inadequacy and failure after their own school experiences.

Many parents also see teachers as unwilling or uninterested in working together with them. Several studies have confirmed that although most parents truly care about their children's education, they may not know how to help with it. Some parents express the wish that teachers would make a greater effort to involve them in their children's learning. According to one recent survey, 79 percent of parents report wanting to learn more about how to be involved in their children's education.[29]

Integral to the success of parental involvement in education is good communication between school and families. The communication cannot be only formal and one-way; schools cannot wait to communicate with parents only when problems arise. Particularly as students enter middle and high school, parental involvement is critical to ensuring academic success. It is during these years that children begin to grapple with how to deal with authority, handle independence, and respond to social pressures, and they become more at risk for dropping out of school. Despite the importance of parental involvement, studies show that parents tend to decrease their school involvement once their children move to middle and high school. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that will draw parents into schools, particularly in the later grades.[30]

Because a key factor in supporting family involvement is the level of support and information provided by schools in promoting an active partnership, Title I is designed to encourage such efforts. All Title I schools are required to develop, with parents, a school-parent compact that recognizes their shared responsibility for learning and outlines how each will support high achievement by students. The U.S. Department of Education's *Compact for Learning* is a guide that helps schools, families, and students think through their shared responsibility for achievement. Suggestions for parents include:

- **Working with the school** to plan a rigorous academic program and discussing with children the importance of working hard to get the most out of school;

- **Monitoring student progress** and supervising the completion of homework;

- **Reading at home** together and encouraging children to read at least 30 minutes a day;
- **Pledging to attend back-to-school events** and teacher conferences, and volunteering for at least one event per semester to support the school; and
- **Participating in school decisions** by attending meetings and serving on advisory councils.

If schools are to end social promotion and hold students more accountable for performance, compacts can help parents and families define responsibilities for helping students meet academic standards.

Involve community stakeholders

Community resources must be tapped to help students meet high expectations. Businesses must take a leading role in helping students meet standards. Businesses depend on the products of the American public education system but often complain about the quality of students and must spend resources on remediation for students who graduate from schools without the skills necessary for work and careers.

Businesses have the power to help end social promotion by connecting academic performance to future work opportunities. Businesses can offer internships to students and make the connection between school and work tangible by asking to review student transcripts when interviewing students for jobs.

Mentoring Programs

Mentors are concerned adults who offer youth support, guidance, and encouragement. Although the specific roles of mentors may vary quite a bit, every good mentor must do two things: make a connection and use that connection to convey a positive message. Mentors come from all walks of life. Volunteers come from large corporations, small businesses, churches, hospitals, charitable institutions, and colleges, just to name a few. Mentoring programs commonly focus on tutoring and academic assistance, access to college, career preparation, and role modeling. Research shows that mentoring can make a difference.

For example, a study of students matched with adult mentors by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America showed that after 18 months, students with mentors were less likely to engage in risky behavior. Students with mentors were less likely to begin to use illegal drugs or alcohol. Students with mentors also were less likely to skip school and felt more confident in their school performance.

-From Yes, You Can: A Guide for Establishing Mentoring Programs to Prepare Youth for College

Business and community members can help end social promotion by becoming mentors to students and by spending time in schools as tutors and teachers. These connections between school and community can be a powerful motivating force for students who may otherwise see their academic careers as a dead end.

Starting Early

To prepare students to meet high standards, we must start early. From years of experience in observing, studying, and teaching young children, we have learned of the importance of the early childhood years. We know that young children learn by having a range of frequent, positive early learning experiences. Early childhood education can help children develop broad knowledge and higher-level skills, as well as help educators identify children at risk of school failure and take steps to ensure their readiness for school and successful learning in the early grades.

Provide opportunities for preschool

Given what we know about the importance of children's earliest years, it is imperative that all children have access to high-quality early care and educational experiences to help them get ready for school. These efforts must involve educating parents, offering children and their families a broad range of interesting experiences, and providing much better early care and education settings than many children now experience.

Bright Beginnings: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools

The public prekindergarten program in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools, called Bright Beginnings, is funded mainly through Title I funds. As a result of a comprehensive planning effort, the school district decided to use 85 percent of its Title I funds to get children ready for school in collaboration with Head Start, special education, and other public and private partners.

Bright Beginnings serves children who are selected through an assessment process that uses developmentally appropriate measures. Children are served in one of three prekindergarten centers or in prekindergarten classrooms in neighborhood elementary schools within the district.

Staff at Bright Beginnings actively engage families in their children's learning at home and at school, and parents report tremendous satisfaction with the program and with their involvement in the growth, development, and learning of their children. The program supports a caring environment and gives four-year-olds a literacy-rich, resource-rich, full-day prekindergarten experience. All teachers are early childhood specialists who have at least a bachelor's degree and are certified to teach by the state. Professional development is continuous. Each classroom of 18 or 19 children has a teacher and a teacher's aide. The district has developed its own prekindergarten curriculum, content standards, and performance expectations that set high expectations for every child's growth, development, and learning.

The program, which now serves over 1,900 children, plans to expand to 4,000 children--the number of children identified by the school district as needing high-quality preschool services to get them ready for school.

All states fund some type of initiatives for children from birth to age 3, some of which meet new parents in hospitals at the birth of their child and provide follow-up home visits to ensure that parents understand their parenting responsibilities and have access to support services for themselves and their children when needed. The federally funded Head Start program has expanded to serve children birth to age 3 and their families, and is reaching out to pregnant women before their children are born. And, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C, states receive financial assistance for maintaining and implementing statewide, comprehensive, multidisciplinary systems to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through age 2, and their families. Under Part B of IDEA, states also receive additional federal financial assistance to fund the costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities ages 3 to 5.

High-quality early childhood and preschool education programs not only give children enriching and stimulating experiences to nurture their growth, development, and learning, but in many cases offer parents access to resources that can help strengthen their parenting skills. For example, Chicago's "Cradle to Classroom" program works with 700 young mothers each year to train them in the skills they need to stimulate their children's minds as well as to care for them physically, emotionally, and socially. The city's "Parents as Teachers" program trains liaison personnel to visit the homes of 1,500 preschoolers to help develop preliteracy skills.

When young children participate in a high-quality preschool, qualified professionals can assess children's developmental progress across all developmental domains--physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge. This is especially important for children with limited English language skills as well as children who are experiencing or are at risk of developmental delays and disabilities. These children often have much less access to preschool learning experiences than other children do. Linking children and families with targeted early intervention services as well as high-quality preschool programs is critical to helping all children reach appropriate developmental milestones in the acquisition of important early language and literacy skills.

The Georgia Voluntary Prekindergarten Program

The Georgia Voluntary Prekindergarten Program was launched in 1992. Alarmed by an unacceptably high dropout rate and increasing teen pregnancy rates, the state decided to make a significant investment in early prevention. The program was instituted to provide children with high-quality preschool experiences necessary for future school success and to provide resources and support for parents to ensure that success. With a current annual infusion of $210 million from the state lottery fund, approximately 70 percent of all eligible four-year-olds attended preschool during the 1997-98 school year. A critical component of this program is its outreach to the more than 40 percent of four-year-olds who have been identified as being at risk of school failure because of economic disadvantage.

Eligible children receive before- and after-school care, free and reduced-price meals, and transportation. Prekindergarten programs are operating in public and private elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary vocational technical institutes, private and state colleges, private nonprofit and for-profit child care learning centers, Department of Family and Children's Services offices, Head Start sites, hospitals, military bases, and YMCA/YWCAs. The program grew from serving 750 children during the 1992-93 school year to serving 60,000 children during the 1997-98 school year.

Families can choose from a variety of settings and curricula. The school-readiness goals of the program emphasize growth in language and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical development, and personal and social competence. Standards for classrooms require interactive learning opportunities that are age appropriate, meet individual needs, and enhance children's feelings of comfort, security, and self-confidence. All teachers in the program must have early childhood training and must participate in staff development and training activities.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom and to participate in parent-teacher conferences, meetings, parent group activities, and workshops. Parents are also strongly encouraged to read to their children daily. Family resource coordinators support parents' efforts to become involved in their child's educational development process, and parents have opportunities to obtain information and needed services, including adult education, employment counseling, literacy classes, and health services.

A longitudinal study (1993-96) conducted by the Department of Early Childhood Education at Georgia State University using comparison groups of 315 children indicates that children in the Prekindergarten Program surpassed the comparison children on teacher ratings in five different areas of development, promotion to first grade, and attendance. At the completion of first grade, the Prekindergarten Program children achieved higher scores on 10 separate measures of academic development and achievement.

Emphasize early childhood and family literacy

Starting early is critical in helping students develop literacy skills. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, more than one child in six has problems learning to read during the first three years in school. Children who do not learn to read make up more than half of the special education population. Today, proficient readers remain a minority in the United States, with only about a third of students in grades 3, 8, and 12 attaining at least the proficient level in reading.[31] Studies reveal that students who do not learn to read are blocked from achievement in every other subject in school.

The Administration has committed to ensuring that all students can read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Therefore, reading must be introduced early, integrated into preschool activities, and reinforced at home.

A recent report by the National Research Council suggests that preschool programs be designed to include attention to skills known to predict future reading achievement. Instruction should be designed to stimulate verbal interaction, enrich children's vocabulary, provide practice with sounds, develop knowledge of print, and instill motivation early for reading.[32]

Through family literacy programs, parents can acquire the skills needed to help children learn to read at home, develop expanded vocabularies, get ready for school, and become high achievers. Even Start is a family literacy program that extends early childhood services, literacy training, parenting training, and English-language instruction to many families with limited proficiency in English as well as English-speaking parents who lack a high school education. Even Start supports intergenerational literacy projects that combine early childhood education and literacy training for their parents.

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children

Childhood environments that support early literacy development and excellent instruction are important for all children. Excellent instruction is the best intervention for children who demonstrate problems learning to read. Adequate initial reading instruction requires that children:

- Use reading to obtain meaning from print,
- Have frequent and intensive opportunities to read,
- Be exposed to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships,
- Learn about the nature of the alphabetic writing system, and
- Understand the structure of spoken words.

—National Research Council

Two years ago President Clinton issued a challenge to every American to help all children become good readers. On October 21, 1998, the President signed the Reading Excellence Act. The legislation will help more than 500,000 children from prekindergarten through third grade develop literacy skills. The $260 million in funds will support professional development, out-of-school tutoring, and family literacy projects.

Strengthening Learning Opportunities in the Classroom

If students are to be held more accountable for their academic performance and made to face consequences for not meeting standards, schools must provide adequate opportunities for students to meet expectations on time. Schools must embrace a comprehensive approach to ending social promotion by using data effectively to identify at-risk students early, before they fall too far behind; ensuring that all students have access to highly qualified and well-trained teachers; and taking advantage of research-based practices to enhance student achievement. These practices include alternative student grouping, cooperative learning, tutoring, and reducing class size. Schools must also be prepared to accommodate students with special needs.

Identify and intervene early with students at risk of falling behind

As education researcher Linda Darling-Hammond explains, "Ensuring that students get the specific help they need requires rich information about what they know and can do as well as how they learn." Not all students who experience difficulty in school do so for the same reasons. Some students have learning disabilities, others have behavioral problems, are not ready for school, or face other challenges in their families and in their lives outside school. Some students barely miss meeting the standards while others perform at levels considerably behind their peers. The point is that in order to help all students meet standards, educators must understand the nature of children's difficulties, and they must do so early.

> *If you are going to have the standards, you're going to have to have support for the standards. You have to give students an opportunity. Don't just say "sink or swim."*
>
> —**Philadelphia parent**

The Individual Acceleration Plan: Tacoma, Washington

Since the 1997-98 school year, Tacoma has been implementing an initiative that uses a series of assessments to determine eligibility for promotion to grades six and nine. Promotion decisions are based on nine measurements: three writing samples, three math projects, a curriculum-reference test, a reading comprehension test, and a teacher assessment on student report cards.

Moreover, the policy addresses the needs of at-risk students. Such students are identified and put on an individual acceleration plan that includes structured family involvement, targeted intervention, after-school activities, and tutoring. For students who still do not reach grade level, the district mandates summer school. When the students are assessed at the end of the summer, any who still cannot meet requirements are placed in a class that does not simply repeat the previous year's material but targets specific areas of need on an individual basis.

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High-quality assessment data can be used in a variety of ways: to inform teachers about gaps in their students' learning; to inform students and their parents about the academic areas to which they need to devote more attention and those in which they are succeeding; to help schools evaluate their proficiency; and to enable the public to learn how successful their schools have been in improving student achievement. As the example below illustrates, assessment is useful only to the extent that it can inform teachers and be used for ongoing student and school improvement.

Analyzing and Using Data to Improve Programs and Practices: Fritsche Middle School, Milwaukee

Decision making at Fritsche Middle School in Milwaukee is based on the question, "How do you know where you are unless you measure it?" The school has designed a continuous improvement profile system for gathering data and using it to plan, define, and document progress.

Previously, the school relied heavily on district information, but the type and format of data provided by the district could not help the school make decisions about local improvement. In addition, communication between the district and schools was a problem. So, with the help of the North Central Regional Education Laboratory, the school developed its own system of data-driven decision making. Fritsche decided to look not only at standardized scores as a way to measure success, but also at the performance of former students, and to collect other data through periodic reports, attendance records, discipline referrals, and other sources. Surveys of the entire school community--administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and former students--are administered annually.

In one example of the school's data-driven decision-making process, an examination of data at Fritsche showed that regular attendance by itself did not raise student achievement. Even at 90 percent attendance, students were falling behind. The school held a session with regularly attending but low-performing sixth-graders and found that the students were often distracted in class and had trouble keeping track of their assignments. After that session, one-on-one tutoring was emphasized at the sixth-grade level. Each team of sixth-grade teachers was given resources to help respond to the problem of failing students. In one team, teachers conducted the tutoring; in another, eighth-grade students helped their younger school-mates organize their assignments.

After one semester of the tutoring program, the number of students with a grade-point average of "C" or lower fell by half and no students got a "D" or lower.

Yet, districts and schools have found it difficult to use data effectively. Schools cannot rely solely on aggregated data from state or district assessments to determine how well students are performing because such information usually lacks the depth to adequately identify particular problems and design interventions accordingly. More important, state and district assessments generally come too late in the game. By third or fourth grade, when most states administer their first standards-based assessments, students with special needs may already be well behind, and each passing year makes it more difficult to catch up.

In order to properly address student needs, principals and teachers need to gather rich data on individual student performance and gather that data often. Schools must also use student data to continuously improve their programs and classroom practices. School staff need to have access to the assessment data gathered on their students by the state and district, and they need to know how to read and interpret the data.

Ensure that there is a well-prepared teacher in every classroom

To be successful, strategies to improve student achievement require good teachers. Yet recent research reveals a troubling picture of the state of our nation's teaching force. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), which compiled hundreds of studies on the subject, more than one-quarter of newly hired teachers have not fully met licensing standards; 12 percent enter with no license at all and another 15 percent enter with only a temporary, provisional, or emergency license. Compounding the problem is the fact that many teachers lack expertise in the subject they are teaching. Overall, nearly 28 percent of teachers of academic subjects have neither an undergraduate major nor a minor in their main assignment fields.[33]

> *School districts should make every effort to...provide systematic supports for ongoing professional development. Such opportunities should give teachers sustained opportunities--not just hit-and-run workshops--for learning about successful teaching strategies. This requires scheduled time for teachers to plan and study together, to learn about effective strategies, to examine curriculum and student work, to observe good practice, and to give and receive coaching.*
>
> **—Linda Darling-Hammond**

High rates of retention and social promotion in many of our schools underscore the need to employ well-qualified and well-prepared teachers. Efforts to end social promotion must include systemic changes in teacher preparation, recruitment, and support. States and districts must end the practices of hiring unqualified teachers and provide incentives for highly qualified teachers to teach in high-poverty schools. The drive to boost student achievement, coupled with the ongoing efforts to implement standards-based reform, demands a radically altered professional development structure.

Teachers need to deepen their content knowledge and learn new teaching methods. While more than half of full-time public school teachers report participation in various professional development programs, many of the activities offered are not adequately designed to address classroom instruction. The very concept of professional development needs to be broadened.

Good Teaching Does Matter

A recent report released by the Education Trust presents research that substantiates what most people understand as common sense--good teaching does matter. Studies of student achievement and teacher effectiveness provide convincing evidence that teachers do make a difference and that the effects of good teachers are long-lived. Findings from studies in Tennessee, Dallas, and Boston reveal that, whatever their background or disadvantages, students taught by effective teachers achieved substantially larger gains than students taught by less effective teachers. For example, the average reading scores of a group of fourth graders in Dallas assigned to three highly effective teachers rose from the 59th percentile to the 76th percentile by grade 6. A slightly higher achieving group taught by less effective teachers fell from the 60th percentile in fourth grade to the 42nd percentile in sixth grade.

After examining studies of teacher effectiveness, the authors of the report found that strong verbal and math skills, deep content knowledge, and teaching skills are critical characteristics for good teachers. The report also suggests the elements of a strategy to assure that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers, including the following:

- Standards for entry into the profession,
- Accountability measures for colleges and universities that prepare teachers,
- Professional development for existing teachers,
- Assurance that poor and minority children have teachers who are at least as qualified as the ones who teach other students,
- Policies to let parents know about the qualifications of teachers instructing their children, and
- Recruitment and rewards to attract the best candidates into teaching.

—Kati Haycock, The Education Trust

In accordance with research findings and the professional development practices of exemplary districts and schools across the nation, the U.S. Department of Education has developed 10 principles of high-quality professional development. Professional development:

1. Recognizes that teachers are central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community;

2. Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;

3. Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community;

4. Reflects the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;

5. Enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, use of technologies, and other essential elements of teaching to high standards;

6. Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools;

7. Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate the activity;

8. Requires substantial time and other resources;

9. Is driven by a coherent long-term plan; and

10. Is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning. This assessment of effectiveness guides subsequent professional development efforts.

Exemplary Professional Development:
H. D. Hilley Elementary School, El Paso, Texas

At H. D. Hilley Elementary School, support from the school district, partnerships with outside organizations, and a focus on both students and teachers as learners contribute to the success of the school's professional development and gains in student performance. H. D. Hilley is a high-poverty school where 96 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and many students have limited proficiency in English. Teachers at H. D. Hilley believe that improving student learning is the ultimate measure of the success of their professional development--and recent scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills reflect their professional development efforts. Between 1995 and 1997, the proportion of third graders mastering all objectives on the test increased from 30 to 48 percent.

H. D. Hilley has been able to achieve these improvements largely because the school improvement team--including teachers, parents, community members and administrators--determines what the school improvement goals will be and how the school will target its professional development resources. Teams involving all the teachers in the school develop strategies to support the goals, and all professional development efforts are linked to these goals. Teams of teachers meet regularly to identify, secure, and assess their professional development.

To involve the community, H.D. Hilley sponsors an active outreach center run by parents. The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, the College of Education at the University of El Paso, and the National Science Foundation-funded Urban Systemic Initiative also support the school's professional development activities and commitment to academic excellence.

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States, school districts, and schools can also help ensure that every classroom has a good teacher by:

- **Providing mentors for new teachers**. To successfully navigate their first year of teaching, new teachers need the support and guidance a veteran teacher can provide. Peer mentoring helps schools retain the most talented and qualified teachers.

- **Preparing teachers to encourage family involvement**. Strategies on how to work with families and engage them in their children's schooling rarely appear in the curricula of most professional development programs. Yet parents often perceive teachers as unwilling to accept, or uninterested in having, their participation. To have successful parental involvement, schools must operate under the assumption that most parents really do want to help their children succeed in school.[34] Teachers need to develop a broad range of skills and knowledge in order to work effectively with parents.

- **Establishing teacher networks**. Teacher networks bring colleagues together to focus on subject matter and to deepen teachers' teaching skills and comprehension of content. They offer teachers a professional community in which they can share ideas, experience, and expertise and serve as a support for one another. Networks are highly respected by teachers and appear to have positive effects on teacher motivation, knowledge of subject matter, and teaching strategies.

- **Providing incentives for teachers to become certified and teach in high-poverty schools.** The problems of high teacher turnover, under qualified teachers, and teaching out of field are especially severe in high-poverty schools, where many teachers lack either a college major or minor in their primary field.[35] Unfortunately, new teachers with the least amount of training are most likely to be placed with the most disadvantaged students. If all students, particularly our nation's most disadvantaged students, are to reach high standards, states and districts must develop strategies for making sure that good teachers stay and are supported in needy schools.

> *One of the most critical areas on which we, as a nation, need to focus is what we must do to prepare the next generation of teachers. In the next ten years we need to recruit 2.2 million teachers....Teachers are the heart and soul of the renaissance of American education, but they are being asked to know more and do more than ever before. We need to give them support so they can continue to help our children learn to high standards.*
>
> **—Richard Riley, Secretary of Education**

Use research-based practices

One of the challenges teachers face is how to effectively teach those children who fail to respond to traditional teaching methods and fall behind. Research provides a great deal of guidance to educators and policymakers about promising strategies for helping all students achieve at high levels, such as innovative ways of grouping students, cooperative learning, keeping teachers together with students for more than one year (looping), tutoring, and reducing class sizes.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program helps schools fund a number of reform models that combine numerous strategies from what we know about good practice into a comprehensive educational program. For example, more than 1,100 schools across the nation are using Success for All, a program of reorganized reading instruction, to help all students meet challenging standards. The program provides for at least 90 minutes of daily reading instruction in classes grouped according to performance. One of the key elements is continual assessment of student progress. Schools implementing the program assess student performance at least once every eight weeks. The frequent assessments allow teachers to develop instructional plans for students with special needs and to move students into and out of groups as they make progress. Success for All draws on all school staff to help students learn to read. In addition to a structured reading curriculum, Success for All offers one-on-one reading tutors and a preschool and kindergarten component to start early in preparing children to read.

To help low-performing children learn, many schools around the country have introduced innovative grouping practices. If teachers are skilled in using them, these flexible grouping strategies can help improve student academic achievement.

The various grouping strategies detailed in this guide, however, differ greatly from the most commonly known ability-grouping practice, known as tracking. Tracking locks students into groups, often over the entire period of their education. Tracking is antithetical to the belief that all children can learn and reach high standards. Furthermore, research shows that tracking policies disproportionately group together African American and Hispanic students, who are far more likely than their peers to be improperly judged to have learning deficits and limited potential.[36]

Kentucky's Ungraded Primary Program

Kentucky's more than 800 primary school programs seek to meet the needs of each child through an academic program referred to as Continuous Progress. Students progress through primary school at their own rate without comparison to the rates of other students or consideration to the number of years in school. The pace of a student's progress through the curriculum is based on the individual strengths, needs, and interests of the student. Children move from one classroom grouping to another when the teacher, parents, and administrators determine that it is developmentally appropriate for that particular child to do so, maximizing student achievement.

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If implemented properly, changes in student grouping practices can benefit at-risk students. But the practice requires a common curriculum and standards that all students are expected to meet, extraordinary professional development, and diligent, regular assessment of student progress and needs. Without this support structure, these practices can easily fall into a system of tracking.

Multi age grouping. Multi age grouping is a strategy that can help counter the growing numbers of young children who are retained or socially promoted in the early grades. This practice mixes children of different ages and grade levels in the same classroom. In a Multi age classroom, teachers focus more on individual student progress rather than grade-level expectations. Furthermore, because Multi age classrooms often emphasize project-based curricula, cooperation, and the sharing of knowledge, the strategy has been known to improve student performance.

Within-class ability grouping. Within-class ability grouping is an approach by which students are divided into two to three ability-based groups within a class. Research has demonstrated that this grouping practice is especially useful for those students who have fallen behind in reading and math. Unlike tracking, where students rarely move from level to level, within-class ability grouping employs smaller groups within a classroom and emphasizes movement across levels as students make progress. Within-class ability grouping must also employ frequent assessment of students to enable them to move easily to the next level when they are ready.

Looping. Looping is the practice of having a teacher stay with a group of students for more than one year. This approach cuts down on the annual back-to-school time spent on learning names, going over classroom procedures, and assessing the needs and skill levels of new students.

Looping allows teachers the opportunity to build lasting and supportive relationships with students as they move with their class from year to year. Because looping permits teachers to assess students over longer blocks of time, during which children have a chance to catch up or develop further skills, looping can reduce the incidence of retention and social promotion.

Alternative Student Grouping Practices: Marshall Middle School, Chicago

Marshall Middle School is committed to creating smaller learning environments, team teaching, flexible scheduling, and grouping for students. The school is divided into four "pods" that occupy separate wings of the school building. All students attend core classes within their pods. To further maintain continuity in instruction, teachers practice "looping" by following their students from seventh to eighth grade.

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is another grouping practice that has been linked to higher student achievement. Cooperative learning occurs when small groups of students with varying levels of ability cooperate on projects within a class. It is a learning strategy that can be used in either the Multi age or the single-age

classroom. Together the children do coursework and share the responsibility for failing or succeeding at the task.

Cooperative learning is a favored model for managing heterogeneity in a classroom with a wide range of basic academic skills. Experts promote its use as a promising practice for all students because it encourages interaction among students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. In addition, considerable research indicates that cooperative learning particularly benefits low-achievers, the students most prone to retention or social promotion.

Tutoring. Tutoring is a successful alternative to and support for teaching in a large group setting, particularly for students who have trouble learning basic skills. Because tutoring is individualized, it can adapt to a child's pace, learning style, and level of comprehension. It also serves to motivate students who have fallen behind academically. Tutoring can ensure that children do not fall behind in the early grades, as well as give students who are struggling the tools to move ahead.

America Reads Challenge: Read*Write*Now!

The research-based America Reads Challenge: Read*Write*Now! tutoring program links children who need help in reading with trained volunteers or other tutors in schools and communities all across the United States. Tutors read to or with children at least once a week for at least a half-hour, and work with children on specially targeted activities--when possible, under the guidance of the children's teachers--to develop basic reading skills. Children are encouraged to read with their families or by themselves for 30 minutes a night, four days a week. Free materials supporting the America Reads Challenge: Read*Write*Now! program can be obtained on the U.S. Department of Education's Web site, <http://www.ed.gov>, or through the Department's toll-free publications numbers, 1-877-433-7827 or 1-800-USA-LEARN.

Tutoring programs are an opportunity for community members and businesses to get involved in helping all children reach high standards. Tutoring also offers opportunities for students to support one another. For example, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, a cross-age tutoring program, targets secondary school students at risk of dropping out and pairs them with elementary school students in a tutoring experience designed to build responsibility, increase self-confidence, and promote bonding with peers and younger children. Research indicates that such targeted intervention can improve the academic achievement of both students. Children often have an advantage over adults in teaching one another because children may more easily understand and relate to other students' problems. One study of third and sixth graders found that student tutors were better than experienced teachers at gauging from nonverbal behavior whether their classmates understood the lessons being taught. Also, student tutors often seem to be particularly capable of presenting subject matter in terms that fellow students can comprehend. Through the interaction between students, peer tutoring has the effect of encouraging the modeling of study skills and work habits. Research on student tutoring also has

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indicated that a student at risk of school failure is more likely to relate to a student who is of the same age and ethnic or social background than to an adult.

Although tutoring is a promising strategy to provide targeted assistance to children at risk of retention in grade or social promotion, it needs to be carefully implemented if the desired outcomes are to be achieved. To be effective, tutors must be trained in content and proper tutorial and communications skills. Furthermore, tutors need the supervision and support of teachers and administrators so that their work and the students' progress are closely monitored. The support of the entire school staff is necessary for a successful tutoring program.

Reduce class size

President Clinton sponsored legislation in 1998 that will help to reduce class size nationally to an average of 18 students per class in the early elementary grades. In 1999 the U.S. Department of Education will distribute $1.2 billion to states and districts to recruit, hire, and train regular and special education teachers; to test new teachers for academic content knowledge; and to provide professional development activities to teachers.

Reducing class size is a powerful tool that schools can use to help children who are failing to perform at grade level, particularly disadvantaged students. Research has documented that smaller classes with fewer than 20 children can boost academic achievement among students. A recent initiative in Burke County, North Carolina, that was aimed at reducing class size showed that teachers in small classes were able to spend significantly more of their time on teaching than on disciplinary action or organizational matters, in comparison with teachers in large or regular-size classes.

Reducing Class Size: Project STAR

Tennessee's Project Star (Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio) is the largest, longest-lasting, and most controlled study to date on class size. The study compared classes of 13 to 17 students with classes of 22 to 26 students, both with and without instructional aides in the larger classes.

The STAR study has provided key research on smaller class size, showing that students in smaller classes outperform similar students in larger classes. Project STAR demonstrated that students in smaller classes scored higher than students in larger classes on standardized and curriculum-based tests. This was true for white and minority students and for students from inner-city, urban, suburban, and rural schools. In each grade, minorities and disadvantaged students enjoyed greater small-class advantages than whites on some or all measures. In addition, a smaller proportion of students in the smaller classes were retained, and there was more early identification of students' special needs.

The Project Star experiment has been followed by the Lasting Benefits Study. To date, the research findings show higher academic achievement levels for the students from the smaller classes persisting through at least the eighth grade.

Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) Program
Wisconsin

The Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program in Wisconsin program grew out of a set of recommendations made by the State Superintendent's Urban InitiativesTask Force in 1995. The legislature provided $4.6 million in 1996-97 to implement the program in grades K-1 in 30 schools. In 1997, it approved an additional $2.3 million to expand the program to second grade, and in 1998 it gave the program $4.7 million to add third grade and more than 40 new schools.

Any district with a school with more than 50 percent of its students from low-income families is eligible to receive SAGE funding. Each district must then identify one school with at least a 30 percent poverty level to serve as its demonstration site (Milwaukee can identify up to 10 schools). Each participating school must enter into an "achievement improvement contract" with the state that includes a plan for improving student achievement. In return, the school receives $2,000 for each low-income student it enrolls to do the following:

- Reduce class size to 15 students in the designated grade levels.
- Establish lighted schools that remain open from early in the morning until late in the evening. During those periods, the schools offer a variety of services and educational and recreational activities.
- Develop a rigorous curriculum that promotes student academic achievement.
- Create professional development and accountability systems that establish performance objectives.

An evaluation of the SAGE program shows that first and second grade students in SAGE schools outperform students in demographically-similar comparison schools. SAGE students scored significantly higher on post-tests in language arts and math and exhibited greater growth in achievement scores than students in the comparison schools.

Reducing class size can be an important component of any effort to reduce the incidence of social promotion or retention, yet school leaders should consider the following factors when deciding to institute smaller classes:

- **Smaller class size works especially well in the primary grades and with disadvantaged and minority students.** The clearest evidence of the positive effects of smaller class sizes has been demonstrated in the early grades. Research on class size effects in Tennessee, Indiana, Wisconsin, and North Carolina show clear academic gains for students in smaller classes through the third grade.

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- **Professional development is key to the success of smaller classes**. There is little doubt that reducing class size can help teachers do a better job at helping children who are falling behind. But teachers must be prepared with the necessary tools and learning strategies to take advantage of smaller teacher-pupil ratios. Professional development activities must be tailored to meet the needs of teachers in smaller classes. When teachers are trained to teach a small class, they report that they have a better attitude toward students and can better individualize instruction practices.

- **Smaller class sizes must be accompanied by other strategies to eliminate social promotion**. Introducing smaller classes in a school is not a cure-all. Instead, to improve achievement it is necessary to implement targeted reductions in class size along with other strategies described in this guide.

Accommodate students with special needs

In implementing strategies to help all students reach high standards, districts and schools must address the needs of students who face special challenges. Students for whom English is not their first language, migrant students, and students with disabilities are often at particular risk of falling behind their peers academically.

Students with limited proficiency in English (LEP). Any discussion of efforts to help all children reach high standards of learning must consider ways of effectively educating the large and growing number of students with limited English-language skills in schools across the nation. Over the past 20 years, the percentage of Hispanic students in U.S. public schools has more than doubled. According to recent estimates, there are more than 3.1 million LEP students in the United States.[37] These students have much higher rates of poverty, a greater tendency to drop out of school, and much less access to early childhood services than their non-minority and English-speaking peers.

Students with limited English-language skills can benefit from transitional programs. Transitional programs provide instruction in the English language as well as in the native language of students who have been in the country for a short period of time. Such programs assess the needs of students while helping them adjust to their new surroundings. Newcomer High School in San Francisco, founded in 1979, was the first program of its kind in the country. In 1998, Newcomer High School served 369 students in grades 9-11. Ninety-eight percent of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. About 50 percent of students are Chinese, 27 percent are Hispanic, 9 percent are Russian, and 4 percent are Filipino. Students usually spend one year at the school before transferring to another district high school; they study English as well as their primary language and take bilingual or sheltered English classes in core content areas. Teachers team up to align the school's curriculum with district standards. The school also links students and their families with needed social, medical, and mental health services.

Transitional Program for Non-English-Speaking Students: International High School, New York City

Founded in 1985, the International High School, a collaborative project between the New York City Board of Education and LaGuardia Community College, is a faculty-governed, multicultural educational alternative for relatively recent arrivals to the United States. The mission of the school is to enable each student to develop the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural skills necessary for success in high school, college, and beyond. Students must have been in the United States for less than four years to attend the International High School.

The school emphasizes heterogeneous, collaborative groupings of students as well as career-oriented internships for students. The classes are organized into thematic, interdisciplinary studies. Almost all students take college courses through the community college. The campus is open during the week for more hours than the average school day and is open on the weekends for students to take advantage of the resources available to them in a college setting.

To meet graduation requirements, students must present four years of successful course evaluations and portfolios of their best work, including a research paper, literary essay, science project/experiment, application of highest level of math attainment, personal expression of creativity, native/foreign language paper, a written self-evaluation, and an oral defense. The International High School has greater than 90 percent rates of attendance, course passing, and graduation.

In addition to being offered special transitional and other programs to meet their needs, students with limited English proficiency also must be encouraged to take the same challenging coursework as their peers. Recent studies show that many students, particularly Hispanic, African American, and disadvantaged youth, do not now take challenging courses such as algebra and geometry in school, even though students who study algebra in middle school and plan to take advanced math and science courses in high school are more likely to go to college. The College Board's EQUITY 2000 project, for example, helps districts with a high proportion of minority and disadvantaged students to phase out lower-level mathematics in favor of a college preparatory curriculum. It does so through heightening teachers' expectations for their students, encouraging students to take more rigorous courses, and engaging families in the learning process.

Migrant students. The more than 600,000 migrant students in the United States also face problems related to social promotion and retention. Because these students are mobile, maintaining educational continuity must be at the forefront of intervention strategies. The Migrant Education Program (MEP) statute offers considerable flexibility to states to design and implement services that help migrant children meet challenging standards. For example, education services available before and after school help migrant youth who must work during the school year. Some states and districts have adopted a home-based service delivery model,

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especially when trying to reach preschool migrant children and to enhance parenting skills within a family unit. Districts and schools can provide services at hours and locations that may entice older migrant children who no longer attend school to return. A number of states provide intensive education services to migrant students through short residential programs in the summer or during vacation periods. Distance learning, correspondence courses, and coordinated instruction across school sites are strategies that also address the needs of highly mobile students.

Meeting the Needs of Migrant Students

Migrant children suffer from frequent disruptions in their education. In addition, many migrant children come from language-minority families and face linguistic and cultural challenges. There are numerous examples of programs designed to meet the special needs of migrant students:

- Project SMART in Texas takes the classroom to pre-kindergarten to 12th grade migrant students through live, interactive, distance learning for eight weeks during the summer. More than 30,000 migrant students are involved in the program, which establishes computer links at centers, camps, and homes throughout the state, and uses cable television to reach migrant students and their families.

- The California Mini-Corps program provides direct instructional services to more than 76,000 migrant students through the use of college tutors from similar backgrounds.

- PASS, the "portable assisted study sequence," gives students the opportunity to earn credits toward graduation even if they move from school to school. Students earn credits at other schools (or by working on their own) that are transferable and count toward graduation at their home-base school.

Students with Disabilities. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states must ensure that a free appropriate public education is made available to all children with disabilities, beginning at age three and extending through high school graduation or a student's 22nd birthday, depending on state law or practice. The IDEA requires that each disabled child must receive a program of instruction and services in conformity with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by a team composed of the child's parents, school personnel, and other required participants.

All disabled children must be educated in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs. This means that children with disabilities must be educated, to the maximum extent appropriate, in regular classes with their age appropriate, nondisabled peers, with appropriate supplementary aids and services, in the school they would attend if not disabled. In order to ensure that each child's IEP appropriately addresses the child's unique special educational needs, the IEP team must regularly review each student's progress toward attaining

the annual goals and determine whether any additional accommodations or modifications are needed. This is to ensure that the student's disability-related needs are addressed and that the student continues to be involved in and progresses in the general curriculum. Under Federal civil rights laws, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, it would be impermissible for school officials to make decisions about social promotion and grade retention solely on the basis of the category of the student's disability.

Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities: Chicago

While all students with disabilities have individual learning needs, one should not automatically assume that a student receiving special education services will be unable to succeed at high academic levels. Parents and school personnel should have high expectations for all children, including children with disabilities. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) have instituted a program designed to appropriately address the needs of disabled students, while at the same time, ending social promotion.

Children with disabilities are expected to meet the CPS standards for promotion, unless a child's Individual Education Program (IEP) Team determines otherwise. In such cases, a child's IEP Team develops an individual promotion standard for that child. If the child does not meet an applicable standard, the child will be required, like nondisabled peers, to attend an appropriate summer school.

Although a school district eliminates social promotion, it must continue to meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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Extending Learning Time

By intervening early in a child's school career and targeting those students who need intensive and tailored assistance, extended learning programs can help prepare students academically and developmentally to move to the next grade. Like other strategies in this guide, federal resources such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act can be used to support efforts to extend learning time. Currently, Title I helps to fund over 13,000 extended-time instructional programs across the nation.

> *Along with ending the practice of social promotion we must provide extra help for children after school and in the summer so that we don't just identify children as failures, but instead say, "We're going to give you more help until you succeed."*
>
> **—President Clinton, July 1998**

Extending learning time for students includes strategies such as establishing quality after-school and summer school programs, and moving toward a year-round school schedule.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program enables schools to provide expanded learning opportunities for children after school, on weekends, and during the summer in a safe, drug-free, and supervised environment. The program is greatly expanding in 1999, as a result of receiving $200 million following a recent report by the Departments of Education and Justice on the effectiveness of after-school programs and a Charles Stewart Mott Foundation survey that showed the public's strong desire to make high-quality after-school programs available to all children.

The centers offer homework assistance, intensive tutoring in basic skills, counseling to prevent drug use and violence, and enrichment in core academic subjects as well as opportunities to participate in recreational activities, the arts, technology education programs, and services for children and youth with disabilities. The centers are supported through school-community partnerships that include public and nonprofit agencies and organizations, local businesses, and educational entities.

The Bayfield Public School System in Wisconsin, for example, has identified cultural isolation, alcohol and drug use, and single-parent families as the main risk factors that affect the achievement of its students. The district's 21st Century Community Learning Center contains elements of integrated education, health, social service, recreational, and cultural programs; literacy education; and parenting skills education.

Establish after-school programs

Children's participation in high-quality learning environments that build on the regular school day, such as after-school extended learning programs, can improve their academic and social development. Research has shown that students who participate in after-school programs exhibit higher achievement in reading, math, and other subjects compared with their own past performance and with the performance of comparable students who did not participate in such a program.[38]

Programs that include tutoring and activities related to reading and writing, in particular, can increase reading achievement for young children. After-school programs give students an opportunity to practice the skills acquired during the school hours through interaction with attentive and well-trained adults.

- Project Read in **New York City**, for example, provides intensive reading instruction to over 100,000 students in grades 1-3 after school as well as during the school day. According to a recent study by the district, third graders who participated in the after-school program experienced significant gains in achievement.

- **New Haven** has begun implementing voluntary after-school and Saturday school literacy programs at six elementary schools for second, third, and fourth graders. During the Saturday academies, students participate in 45 minute reading, writing, and math classes based on the state assessment. The district's afterschool reading centers are based on the Comer model, developed by Dr. James Comer at Yale University, and will include participation by certified reading teachers, paraprofessionals and parents.

- **Chicago**'s Lighthouse program provides students with an hour of academic assistance and one hour of recreation after school. In 1998 the program served 175,000 students in Chicago, including all students who failed to meet the district's promotion standards after participating in Summer Bridge.

Summer Bridge Program: Chicago Public Schools

In August 1996, Chicago adopted a rigorous student promotion policy that requires underachieving students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 9 to complete a summer school program before being promoted to the next grade. Students who do not meet designated minimum scores on the district's standardized tests or who fail reading or math must successfully complete a six or seven week summer remediation program. All ninth graders who miss more than 20 days of school or fail to earn the required core credits also are required to attend the summer-school programs. Students who fail the summer programs are held back. Eighth graders over the age of 15 who fail to reach grade level after the summer program are assigned to an alternative school for overage students. After one semester, they can retake the test to see whether they are eligible to reenroll in their high school. In 1998, about 60,000 students attended Summer Bridge classes.

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Participation in a strong after-school program provides numerous additional benefits to children at risk of school failure. As children gain greater confidence in their academic abilities and more interest in school through participation in after-school programs, their school attendance improves. Furthermore, at those after-school programs offering homework assistance, children are more likely to complete their homework and turn in better work. Overall, children in after-school programs display better work habits than their peers.

Provide summer school for students not meeting standards

For students who do not meet standards during the school year, a high-quality summer school program is an essential opportunity. When standards for promotion begin to be enforced, the results can be sobering. Low test scores may galvanize interest in schools, but they also create numerous problems for the public schools and teachers. Yet, a recent survey conducted by the Department of Education indicated that only about one third of districts in the nation have mandatory summer school for students facing retention.[39]

Most districts working to end social promotion have found that summer school is an absolutely necessary component of efforts to help students who do not make the grade. For example:

- The Summer Literacy Program in **Denver**, which began in 1997, is a four-week summer program for students in grades 3, 5, and 8. Third-graders who score one or more years below grade level in reading on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills must attend the program, as do fifth and eighth graders who score two or more years below grade level. Third-grade classes during the summer program do not exceed 20 students, and every room has both a teacher and paraprofessional. Fifth and eighth grade classes do not exceed 15 students. Sessions run for four hours every day for third graders and three hours for all other students. Instruction follows the district's literacy plan, which consists of direct instruction in reading skills as well as guided reading and writing, cooperative reading, and independent reading. In 1998, about 2,200 students completed the program.

- The **Long Beach (California) Unified School District** has instituted programs to reduce the retention rate at grades 3 and 9. Third-graders who score two years below grade level, as determined by a combination of assessments, must attend a five-week summer program. The district retests students at the end of the program to determine their placement for the following year. Students who still score two or more years below grade level must repeat the third grade. Students who score one to two years below grade level are promoted to the fourth grade, where they receive extra tutoring. In 1997, the first year of the program, 55 percent of participating students were promoted to fourth grade after raising their reading achievement to grade level.

Summer STARS: D.C. Public Schools

In 1998, Washington, D.C., Superintendent Arlene Ackerman instituted Summer STARS (Students and Teachers Achieving Results and Success), a massive summer school program for students who perform poorly on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9). Although the six-week summer program is open to all D.C. students, students in grades 1-5 who score below the basic level on the SAT-9 are required to attend the summer program, which is designed to improve their basic reading and math skills. Students who score at the basic level on the SAT-9 are encouraged to attend the summer program. At the end of the program, teachers evaluate students' progress and make recommendations regarding promotion. Eighth-grade students who score below the basic level on the SAT-9 also must attend the summer school program every year until they reach the basic level or pass the district's high school proficiency test. In its first year, over 24,000 students attended summer school.

The summer school program runs every day of the week from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. To successfully complete the program, students may not miss more than three sessions. The curriculum consists of two hours of reading and two hours of math instruction in classrooms with just 15 students. The program also provides enrichment activities for students, including trips to the Smithsonian museums and parks.

Move toward year-round schooling

In a 1994 report, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning recommended that schools stay open longer during the day and for more days during the year. Year-round schools substitute a few short breaks throughout the year for the traditional long summer break. This schedule gives children more learning time and helps prevent some of the loss of ground that takes place in the summer months. Teachers may spend less time reviewing previously taught material and students can gain up to six weeks of schooling beyond the traditional school year. Many districts also see year-round schooling as a way to control overcrowding that may arise from efforts to reduce class sizes.

Nationwide, almost 2,000 public and private schools enroll more than 1.4 million students in year-round schools. Most students still attend school for about 180 days per year, but the year is stretched over a 12-month period with shorter breaks.[40]

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Year-Round Schooling:
Socorro Independent School District, El Paso, Texas

The Socorro Independent School District in El Paso considered year-round education in part because the traditional school year could not accommodate the growing school-age population in the district. A task force made up of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders studied the options--split sessions, portable classrooms, higher student-teacher ratios, and year-round schooling--and decided that year-round education would offer better academic opportunities for students. Shorter vacations reduce the loss of learning and the district would offer educational programs to underachieving students between sessions of schooling.

Between 1997 and 1998 the proportion of Socorro students passing the reading, writing, and mathematics portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills has improved at every grade level. Over 80 percent of students in grades 4, 8, and 10 met Texas's standards for reading and at least 70 percent of students across the grade levels met the state standard for mathematics.

—**from *Prisoners of Time: Schools and Programs Making Time Work***

Helping Students Who Still Do Not Meet Standards

For students who continue to be unsuccessful in meeting standards, repeating a grade still is not an effective strategy. Students in this situation need other alternatives that help them develop the skills they need to achieve. The commitment to ending social promotion must extend to providing all students with every chance to meet high expectations. No student should be allowed to fall through the cracks. Most of the strategies in this section are designed to help students in the critical middle and high school grades.

Develop effective transition programs for students unprepared for promotion

In making the transition from childhood to young adulthood, students face tough challenges and peer pressure that can seriously affect their academic lives. At this stage of their academic careers, particularly as states and districts are increasing the stakes for students to pass exit exams before they can receive high school diplomas, teenagers need extra help. Two of the many examples of programs to ease the transition of students into high school and beyond are described here. Some programs provide alternative settings for students while others provide more individualized attention within the traditional middle or high school.

- Agua Fria High School, near **Phoenix**, has a transition school program that provides academic and counseling support to students whose poor basic skills or attendance are impairing their performance in their regular classes. The program's goal is to return students to their regular classrooms once they have caught up with the rest of the class. Most students attend the program for one semester before returning to their class. The program works with no more than eight students each class period, and about 125 students attend each year. A certified teacher and classroom aide provide computer-assisted and small-group instruction, while a home-school liaison offers counseling. Students attend the transition school instead of a regular class to work on the skills or material with which they need particular help. According to the program coordinator, "Students are not assigned here to make up a particular class. We focus more on strengthening a particular skill that affects their performance in all classes." Through partnerships with a local community college, Agua Fria also allows students aged 17-20 with at least 12 credits toward graduation to earn either their high school diploma or a GED or both while attending the college.

- In Connecticut, **East Hartford** High School's ninth-grade transition program provides academic tutoring while allowing the student to work closely with a full-time staff member. The program, instituted to cut the ninth-grade retention rate, assigns a tutor to each ninth-grade team of teachers. Tutors participate in all team meetings and assist in classes. Tutors work with at-risk students during the students' study hall periods as well as during a mandatory afterschool program, and maintain weekly contact with parents. Social work interns lead weekly small-group sessions on study skills, time management,

and goal setting. A Summer Transition Program for incoming freshmen provides three weeks of academic enrichment in each of the core academic areas. About 70 students who fail two or more classes in the eighth grade attend the summer program.

- The **Long Beach Unified School District** assigns eighth-graders who fail two or more classes to an alternative program titled the Long Beach Preparatory Academy. The Prep Academy is a year-long program that has smaller classes than regular ninth-grade classes. A counselor and a social worker work closely with students and their families. In the program's first year in operation, close to 90 percent of over 280 participating students earned the right to be promoted to the ninth grade.

Charter Schools

Of the more than 500 federally funded charter schools operating in the nation, many serve students who are at risk of dropping out, are low achievers, or are in adjudication. Thirty percent of federally funded charter schools serve a high-poverty student population, 20 percent are alternative schools, and many focus on the needs of students with limited English language skills.

Sometimes, despite the best efforts of schools and teachers, students still are not ready to move on to the next grade. Alternative public schools or an alternative program within a school can offer a second chance for children who are failing. There are many different types, but most share the following characteristics: fewer students per teacher, individualized attention, a mentoring environment, clear academic and behavioral standards, a strong education program, strong parental participation, and counseling services.

Prevent dropouts and help students realize postsecondary opportunities

Strategies that create smaller learning environments and tailor instruction more closely to individual needs in a supportive environment are becoming a trend, not just for intervention and transition programs, but also for the design of middle and high schools more generally. Many high schools where dropping out has become a serious problem have redesigned the traditional, large, impersonal high school into smaller learning academies or schools within

Reasons Students Drop of High School

- Dislike of school, often because school is boring and irrelevant to student needs;
- Low academic achievement and poor grades;
- Retention (particularly being held back more than once)
- Poverty, including the need or desire to work full time;
- A sense that teachers and administrators do not care about students; and
- Inability to feel comfortable in a large, depersonalized school setting.

schools. Patterson High School in Baltimore, for example, has become a nationally recognized example of how personalizing relationships, along with concentrating on curriculum, can create a good learning environment.[41] The school adopted the Talent Development Model, reorganizing the school into four career academies and a special school just for ninth-graders. Instead of suspending or transferring students with discipline or attendance problems, Patterson has an after hours "Twilight School" to help get the students on track. After the first two years of implementation, the school's attendance rate, school climate, and the percentage of students meeting state standards increased.[42]

As mentioned earlier in this guide, 13 states now have exit exams aligned with state standards that high school students must pass in order to graduate. As such policies are adopted, the risk that students will drop out of school may increase if states and districts do not also implement strategies for helping students pass proficiency tests. In New York City for example, the "Post-5" program is designed to address the needs of students unable to meet graduation requirements. Students receive accelerated and alternative instruction but are held to the same high standards for graduation.

Motivating students to stay in school often involves expanding their horizons to think through and carry out career and postsecondary education goals. Several U.S. Department of Education programs respond to this new emphasis and help young people and adults develop the knowledge and skills they need for careers that often demand ever-higher levels of education and training. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act, administered jointly by the Department of Education and the Department of Labor, provides seed money to every state and to interested communities to develop and launch a comprehensive school-to-work system. These systems combine school-based and work-based learning with activities designed to prepare students for a first job.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that schools provide transition services to help students with disabilities move more successfully from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, and employment. The National Transition Alliance (NTA), funded under IDEA, provides technical assistance to state school-to-work systems to assist them in addressing the needs of students with disabilities in their programs. The NTA also develops and disseminates information about effective transition practices that support youth with disabilities in learning the skills needed to live successfully in the community and thrive in the workplace.

The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 include a new national effort to encourage more young people to have high expectations, stay in school and study hard, and go to college. In a recent survey, almost 70 percent of parents indicated that they have little information, or want more information, about which courses their child should take to prepare for college, and 89 percent of parents want more information about how to pay for college, including the use of tax credits.[43]

Earlier this year President Clinton proposed the High Hopes for College initiative to create a national effort so that every college works in partnership with at least one middle school in a low-income community to help raise expectations and ensure that students are well prepared for college. Under the new GEAR UP program (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) the Department is spending $120 million to fund competitive grants that support early college awareness activities at both the state and local levels. The initiative will award multi year grants to locally designed partnerships between colleges and high-poverty middle and high schools, plus at least two other partners--such as community organizations, businesses, religious groups, state education agencies, parent groups, or nonprofits--to increase college attendance rates among low-income youth by:

- Informing students and parents about college options and financial aid,
- Promoting rigorous academic coursework based on college entrance requirements, and
- Providing comprehensive services--mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other activities such as after-school programs, summer academic and enrichment programs, and college visits--to students beginning in grades 6 and 7 and continuing through high school graduation.

Each of these programs and strategies can contribute to ending social promotion by helping students feel that adults care about their future and helping the students understand how their academic careers are related to their future potential. Creating smaller learning communities, personalizing instruction, and introducing students to the world of college and work can give students a stake in their educational success that they might not otherwise develop.

Ending social promotion requires attention to the systemic issues that reduce the capacity of our schools to educate our children, along with the political will to make changes and an understanding of the long-term benefits of those changes.

To achieve the goal of ending social promotion, states and districts will have to allocate the resources to help all students meet high standards. School administrators and teachers will then face the challenge of dealing with students who cannot make the grade. Ending social promotion involves taking risks and holding firm to the commitment to help all students reach their full potential. It requires holding stakeholders accountable for helping students reach high standards.

This section discusses the lessons to be learned from the experiences of districts that have made the effort to hold schools accountable for students' performance.

Require public reporting of school performance

Public reporting of school performance is playing an important role in holding schools more accountable and is an important tool for communicating to parents and the public about the quality of schools. To date, 36 states issue school-level report cards. An analysis of early report cards indicates that no two states report the exact same information, and the reports tended to be heavy on "input measures" that described the characteristics of schools rather than focusing on quality or performance.[44]

To be useful, report cards need to display information about a variety of indicators, from student demographics and performance on assessments to use of resources and parental involvement. In some states, such as New York, report cards permit comparisons of student achievement results across similar schools in the state based on the age of students, the resource capacity of the district or school, and the economic needs of the students. Recent amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act also require that, under certain conditions, the performance of students with disabilities be included in these reports.

School Report Cards: What Do Parents Really Want to Know?

A recent special study on school report cards by *Education Week* reveals what parents, taxpayers, and educators feel they need to know about schools in order to make schools more accountable for results. Parents rated the following as the top ten indicators that could be reported to hold schools accountable:

school safety
teacher qualifications
class sizes
graduation rates
dropout rates
statewide test scores
parent survey data
SAT scores
percent of students promoted to the next grade
attendance rates

-Quality Counts, 1999

In many states these report cards are distributed each year to parents and are publicized in local media when released. State, district, and school leaders generally agree that publishing school level indicators of achievement has been an important means of holding schools accountable for student performance.

Intervene in low-performing schools

Accountability for performance means that there must be consequences for schools that fail to help students achieve. Earlier this year the President released *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders*. The guide makes the point that holding schools accountable is not enough. Chronically low performing schools rarely have the capacity, on their own, to make the kinds of changes necessary to improve students' achievement. In these cases, states and districts must help create the capacity, vision, and commitment needed to improve. The guide examined numerous strategies pursued by districts across the country to intervene in chronically low-performing schools, including efforts in:

- **New York City**, where the city's lowest-performing schools, as identified by the New York State Education Department as Schools Under Registration Review (SURR), are assigned to the "Chancellor's District." The Chancellor's District Intervention Plan includes an in-depth assessment of existing school conditions using the Performance Assessment in Schools System (PASS) review, a comprehensive plan to address identified needs, and an intensive support system that ensures quality implementation. This focused intervention has resulted in the removal from the SURR list of all but four of the twelve schools in the Chancellor's Districts within the span of only two years.

- In **Chicago**, where very low performing schools are placed on probation. As part of the process, schools must develop a corrective action plan. Schools must select an external partner to assist them in the process. The district provides a school operations manager to deal with fiscal and administrative matters so that the principal can focus on improving instruction. The district also assigns a probation monitor (a former or current successful principal) to monitor a school's progress toward improving student achievement.

Because social promotion and retention disproportionately affect disadvantaged students in needy schools, it is essential that efforts to hold these schools and students accountable for meeting standards are accompanied by effective intervention strategies. To be effective, accountability measures must engage teachers and the unions that represent them, along with parents and the wider community in bringing about improvement.

Reward school improvement

Holding schools accountable for performance means not only intervening in and assisting schools where students are not meeting standards but also providing incentives for schools to continually improve performance and rewarding schools that meet expectations.

- In **Maryland**, schools that attain significant improvement over a one-year period receive a certificate of recognition. Schools that improve over two to three years receive monetary awards (ranging from $19,000 to $79,000 per school). School improvement teams decide how funds are spent for the benefit of the entire school.

- In **North Carolina**, schools achieving exemplary growth/gain (approximately 10 percent above statewide average) or expected growth/gain are eligible for incentive awards, which can be distributed as direct bonuses to teachers or can be used by the school. For exemplary gains, schools receive up to $1,500 for each certified staff member and $500 for each teacher assistant. For expected gains, schools receive up to $750 per certified staff member and $375 for each teacher assistant. To be eligible for incentives, schools must not have excessive exemptions and must test at least 98 percent of eligible K-8 students and 95 percent of high school students.

Ending social promotion requires real accountability for results--and this accountability must begin at the school level. These strategies require strong leadership, a sense of collective responsibility from within and outside the school, and open and honest communication among stakeholders.

Conclusion

Social promotion is an unacceptable response to the problem of low-achieving students in our nation's schools. All of us must take responsibility for ending social promotion and be prepared to ensure that *every* student achieves to his or her full potential and to the highest standards.

Ending social promotion is not a stand-alone policy that can be adopted and implemented. But it is an important step in sending a message to students about how critical it is for them to meet high standards.

Few, if any, of the recommendations in this guide can, by themselves, meet the challenge of ending social promotion. Ending social promotion requires a comprehensive effort that addresses multiple problems and a variety of student needs. It means setting high standards and measures of accountability for schools and students and taking responsibility for student performance. It also means building the capacity of schools and students to meet those expectations, and intervening to help students who fall behind.

Ending social promotion requires states, districts, and schools to address issues associated with the quality of teachers, the quality of the curriculum and its alignment with standards and assessments, and family support of educational activities. A comprehensive approach to ending social promotion requires early identification and intervention for students with special needs, and effective programs for extending the time and increasing the attention that some students need to meet expectations. It also means encouraging the involvement of more parents in the education of their children at home, in the school, and with the community.

Truly embracing the idea that all children can learn--and making sure that all children do--requires that we all take responsibility for ending social promotion and commit our energy, resources, and best ideas to this effort.

U.S. Department of Education's
Inventory of Resources for Ending Social Promotion

This section provides an inventory of federal program resources that states, districts, and schools can use to help end social promotion and improve academic achievement for all students.

New Programs for 1999

Class Size Reduction. The 1999 budget provides $1.2 billion to hire approximately 30,000 new teachers. It is the first installment in the Administration's commitment to help school districts hire and train 100,000 new teachers. The initiative aims to help reduce class size in grades 1-3 to a nationwide average of 18. States are receiving funds to boost teacher quality through recruitment, hiring and training. For more information telephone Cathy Schagh at (202) 260-3858 or Connie Deshpande at (202) 401-0113.

The Reading Excellence Act. To help all children learn to read well and independently by the end of third grade, this initiative focuses on strategies for creating extended learning opportunities, providing high-quality classroom instruction, strengthening parental involvement and investment in early childhood education, promoting greater public awareness about literacy, and supporting research and evaluation. The 1999 budget provides $260 million to support this initiative. Already, thousands of federal work-study and community volunteer tutors are helping children develop their reading skills. For further information, see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads>or telephone Joseph Conaty at (202) 401-0113.

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). This new competitive-grant program provides $120 million in 1999 to support early intervention and college awareness activities at both the local and the state levels to help low-income middle-school children prepare for college. GEAR UP funding will be split between college-school-community partnership grants and state grants. To learn more about the program, telephone 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the GEAR UP Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/gearup>.

High Standards of Learning for All Students

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. This new program helps schools identify and adopt the high-quality, well-defined, and research-based comprehensive schoolwide reform models that show the most promise of preparing children to meet challenging state content and performance standards. In 1998, $145 million was made available to be distributed as formula grants to state education agencies that will use the funds to make competitive grants to local education agencies. In FY 1999, $120 million will be administered for this program under Title I and $25 million under the Fund for the Improvement of Education.

For further information, telephone Bill Kincaid at (202) 205-4292 or see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/>.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Title I, the largest federal education program for prekindergarten through grade 12, has one overriding goal: to improve teaching and learning for low-achieving children so that they can meet challenging academic standards. Funds are provided to districts and schools in accordance with their numbers of poor children. Schools with poverty rates of 50 percent or higher may combine their Title I funds with state and local resources and most other federal education funds to upgrade their entire education program rather than targeting services only to identified children. Schools with poverty rates below 50 percent, or those that choose not to adopt a schoolwide program, may give services to those children identified as failing or most at risk of failing. For further information, telephone Mary Jean LeTendre at (202) 260-0826 or see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CEP/>.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Goals 2000 is based on the premise that higher expectations produce better performance, that academic standards should be raised, and that schools and teachers should be specific about what they expect children to learn. Goals 2000 challenges states and communities to develop and implement academic content standards, student performance standards and assessments, and plans for improving teacher training. Districts may apply for one of three types of grants: local reform, professional development, or preservice training. Goals 2000 also provides the authority to waive statutory and regulatory requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act and of the following programs under the ESEA: Title I; Title II, Eisenhower Professional Development; Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Title VI, Innovative Education Strategies; and Title VII, Part C, Emergency Immigrant Education. For further information, telephone Patricia Gore at (202) 401-0039 or see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/G2K>.

Extending Learning Time

21st Century Community Learning Centers. This program is authorized under Title X, Part I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The funds must be used to expand a school's capacity to address the educational needs of its community. The program's focus is on expanding learning opportunities for children in a safe, drug-free, and supervised environment and brings much-needed attention to supplementary learning activities that address adolescence and the problems of drug use, gang involvement, and violence. The program has established a priority for projects designed to assist students in meeting or exceeding state or local standards in core academic subjects. The program will award $160 million in new grants in 1999 to serve approximately 1,700 schools and 250,000 students. For further information, telephone Bob Stonehill at (202) 219-2088 or see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/21stCCLC>.

Safe Environment for Learning

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. This program provides funds to help states, schools, and communities design, implement, and evaluate alcohol and drug education and prevention programs. State education agencies (SEAs) are required to distribute

91 percent of their program funds to local education agencies for prevention of drug use and violence. Activities authorized under the statute include: the development of instructional materials; counseling services; after-school programs; professional development programs for school personnel, students, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, or community leaders; conflict resolution, peer mediation, and mentoring programs; character education programs and community service projects; the establishment of safe zones of passage for students to and from school; and the acquisition and installation of metal detectors and the hiring of security personnel. The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act also requires states to target a portion of resources to districts where they are most needed. The law increases accountability by requiring states to measure the success of their programs against clearly defined goals and objectives. For further information, telephone Bill Modzeleski at (202) 260-3954 or see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS>.

Technology

Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund provides funds to states, on a formula basis, to help local districts use technology to strengthen their educational programs. The goals of the Challenge Fund are to provide all teachers with the training and support they need to help students learn by using technology, provide all schools with modern computers, connect all classrooms to the information superhighway, and make effective software and on-line learning resources integral parts of the curriculum in schools. Ninety-five percent of the funds that a state receives must be awarded to school systems on a competitive basis. For further information, telephone Charles Lovett at (202) 401-0039 or visit the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/Technology/inititiv.html>.

Alternative Public Schools

The Public Charter Schools Program. The Charter Schools Program provides financial assistance for designing and implementing charter schools created by teachers, parents, and other community members. Grants are available on a competitive basis to state education agencies (SEAs) in states that allow charter schools; the SEAs make subgrants to authorized public chartering agencies in partnership with developers of charter schools. If an eligible SEA chooses not to participate or if its application for funding is not approved, the Department can make grants directly to eligible local partnerships. Charter schools are free from most education laws and regulations except civil rights and safety laws, but are accountable for results. In return for increased accountability, they gain autonomy in such areas as personnel, curriculum, budgets, scheduling, and other matters through a legal contract with a school board or other public chartering agency authorized by state law. Standards for performance are established in the contract. For further information, telephone John Fiegel at (202) 260-2671 or visit the Web site at <http://www.uscharterschools.org>.

Promoting Family Involvement

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. The mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education is to promote children's learning through the development and

use of family-school-community-business partnerships that strengthen schools and improve student achievement. A growing grass-roots movement of over 4,000 schools, employers, and community and religious groups has emerged to support local and national efforts, including adopting family-friendly business practices; providing before- and after-school activities for children; giving parents the resources, training, and information they need to help children learn; and promoting family and community involvement in children's learning. For further information, visit the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/PFIE/> or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

Preparing Students for Work

School-to-Work Program. A growing understanding of the relationship between our educational performance and our competitiveness in the global economy has led to a new emphasis on the connections between school and work, and a new appreciation of the importance of vocational education and opportunities for lifelong learning. The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act, administered jointly by the Department of Education and the Department of Labor, provides seed money to every state and to interested communities to develop and launch a comprehensive school-to-work system. These systems combine school-based and work-based learning with activities designed to prepare students for a first job. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.stw.ed.gov>.

Vocational Education. Perkins Act Vocational Education State grants provide funds to help pay for vocational training programs at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Funds may be used in accordance with state-developed plans to support activities ranging from pre-vocational courses for secondary school students to retraining adults in response to changing technological and labor market conditions. Another area of significant federal support to assist states in preparing individuals for employment is Vocational Rehabilitation. The Department provides Vocational Rehabilitation state grants that assist one million adults with disabilities, most of them severe, in achieving successful employment outcomes and independent living. As a result of this program, about 200,000 individuals with disabilities are placed each year in jobs in the competitive labor market or become self-employed. About 80 percent of those individuals report that their own income, rather than public assistance or family income, is their primary source of support. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE>.

Technical Assistance Providers

Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers. These 15 centers assist states, local education agencies (LEAs), American Indian tribes, schools, and other recipients of funds under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Priority for services is given to high-poverty schools and districts, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and IASA recipients implementing schoolwide programs. The centers help recipients of IASA funds implement school reform programs; adopt, adapt, and implement proven practices for improving teaching and learning; coordinate school reform programs with other federal, state, and local education plans and activities; and administer IASA programs. They provide assistance by identifying and disseminating successful practices and appropriate research-based programs to schools, districts, SEAs, and other educational entities; creating mentoring relationships between low-performing and high-achieving schools;

and providing high-quality professional development for state, school district, and school personnel to increase their capacities for supporting programs authorized by IASA. For further information on the centers in general, telephone Edith Harvey at (202) 260-1393 or see the Web site at<http://www.ed.gov/oese/>. Contact information for individual centers as follows:

Region I
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
New England Comprehensive Assistance Center
Wendy Allen, Director
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel St.
Newton, MA 02158-1069
Phone: (617) 969-7110, ext. 2201
Fax: (617) 965-6325
E-mail: wallen@edc.org
Web site: http://www.edc.org/NECAC/

Region II
New York State
New York Technical Assistance Center (NYTAC)
LaMar P. Miller, Executive Director
New York University
82 Washington Square East, Suite 72
New York, NY 10003
Phone: (800) 469-8224
Fax: (212) 995-4199
E-mail: mllrla@is2.nyu.edu
Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/education/metrocenter

Region III
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C.
Region III Comprehensive Center
Charlene Rivera, Director
Institute for Equity & Excellence in Education
George Washington University
1730 N. Lynn St., Suite 401
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (703) 528-3588
Fax: (703) 528-5973
E-mail: crivera@ceee.gwu.edu/
Web site: http://www.gwu.edu/nieee

Region IV
Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Region IV Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center
Terry Eidell, Executive Director
Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
Math and Science Consortium
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-13248
Phone: (304) 347-0400 or (800) 624-9120
Fax: (304) 347-0487
E-mail: aelinfo@ael.org
Web site: http://www.ael.org

Region V
Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi
Region 5 SE Comprehensive Assistance Center
Hai T. Tran, Director
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
3330 N. Causeway Blvd., Ste. 430
Metairie, LA 70002-3573
Phone: (504) 838-6861 or (800) 644-8671
Fax: (504) 831-5242
E-mail: htran@sedl.org
Web site: http://www.sedl.org/secac/

Region VI
Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center Consortium - Region VI
Walter Secada, Director
University of Wisconsin
1025 W. Johnson St.
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: (608) 263-4220
Fax: (608) 263-3733
E-mail: wgsecada@facstaff.wisc.edu
Web site: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi/

Region VII
Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma
Region VII Comprehensive Center
John Steffens, Executive Director
Belinda Biscoe, Director
University of Oklahoma
555 E. Constitution St., Suite 111
Norman, OK 73072-7820
Phone: (405) 325-1729 or (800) 228-1766
Fax: (405) 325-1824
E-mail: regionvii@ou.edu
Web site: http://www.occe.ou.edu/comp/comp.html

Region VIII
Texas
Star Center
Maria Robledo Montecel, Executive Director
Albert Cortez, Site Director
Intercultural Development Research Association
Institute for Policy & Leadership
5835 Callaghan Rd., Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
Phone: (210) 684-8180 or (888) 394-7827
Fax: (210) 684-5389
E-mail: idra@idra.org
Web site: http://www.idra.org

Region IX
Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah
Southwest Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center
Paul E. Martinez, Director
New Mexico Highlands University
500 Laser Rd., NE, Suite B
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
Phone: (505) 891-6111 or (800) 247-4269
Fax: (505) 891-5744
E-mail: info@cesdp.nmhu.edu
Web site: http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu

Region X
Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming
Northwest Regional Assistance Center
Carlos Sundermann, Director
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 Southwest Main St., Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 275-9480
Fax: (503) 275-9625
E-mail: nwrac@nwrel.org
Web site: http://www.nwrac.org

Region XI
Northern California
Comprehensive Assistance Center
WestEd
Beverly Farr, Director
730 Harrison St.
San Francisco, CA 94107-1242
Phone: (415) 565-3009 or (800) 64-LEARN
Fax: (415) 565-3012
E-mail: bfarr@wested.org
Web site: http://www.wested.org/cc

Region XII
Southern California
Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center
Henry Mothner, Director
Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242-2890
Phone: (562) 922-6364
Fax: (562) 922-6699
E-mail: mothner_henry@lacoe.edu
Web site: http://sccas.lacoe.edu

Region XIII
Alaska
Alaska Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center
Bill Buell, Director
South East Regional Resource Center
210 Ferry Way, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 586-6806
Fax: (907) 463-3811
E-mail: joannh@akrac.k12.ak.us
Web site: http://www.akrac.k12.ak.us

Region XIV
Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Comprehensive Assistance Center
Trudy Hensley, Director
Educational Testing Service
1979 Lake Side Parkway, Suite 400
Tucker, GA 30084
Phone: (770) 723-7434 or (800) 241-3865
Fax: (770) 723-7436
E-mail: thensley@ets.org
Web site: http://www.cal.org/cal/html/cc14.htm

Region XV
American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau
Pacific Center
Pacific Resources for Education Learning
John W. Kofel, Executive Director
Fort Street Mall, Suite 500
Honolulu, HI 96813-4321
Phone: (808) 533-6000
Fax: (808) 533-7599
E-mail: kofelj@prel-oahu-1.prel.hawaii.edu
Web site: http://prel-oahu-1.prel.hawaii.edu

Regional Resource and Federal Center Program for Special Education. These centers promote communication among states and school districts about implementing systemwide reform with a particular focus on special education. They provide key technical assistance to state education agencies, school districts, and their partners, as well as link SEAs and school districts with providers of technical assistance.

The Federal Resource Centers for Education
Carol Valdivieso, Director
Academy for Educational Development
1875 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 884-8215
Fax: (202) 884-8443
E-mail: frc@aed.org
Web site: http://www.dssc.org/frc/

Northeast Regional Resource Center
Dolly Fleming, Director
Trinity College of Vermont
Colchester Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401
Phone: (802) 658-503
Fax: (802) 658-7435
E-mail: nerrc@aol.com
Website://interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/nerrc/index.html

Mid-South Regional Resource Center
Ken Olson, Director
Human Development Institute
University of Kentucky
126 Mineral Industries Building
Lexington, KY 40506-0051
Phone: (606) 257-4921
Fax: (606) 257-4353
E-mail: MSRRC@ihdi.ihdi.uky.edu
Web site: http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/projects/Msrrc/

Southeast Regional Resource Center
James Wright, Director
Auburn University Montgomery School of Education
Montgomery, AL 361124
Phone: (334)244-3879
Fax: (334)244-3835
Email:jwright@edla.aum.edu
Web: http://edla.aum.edu/serrc/serrc.html

Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center
Larry Maghocca, Director
The Ohio State University
700 Ackerman Rd., Suite 440
Columbus, OH 43202
Phone: (614) 447-0844
Fax: (614) 447-9043
E-mail: marshall.76@osu.edu
Web site: http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarrc.htm

Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center
John Copenhaver, Director
Utah State University
1780 North Research Parkway, Suite 112
Logan, UT 84341
Phone: (801) 752-0238
Fax: (801) 753-9750
E-mail: cope@cc.usu.edu
Web site: http://www.usu.edu/~mprrc

Western Regional Resource Center
Richard Zeller, Director
1268 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1268
Phone: (541) 346-5641
Fax: (541) 346-5639
E-mail: richard_zeller@ccmail.uoregon.edu
Web site: http://interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/wrrc.html

The Regional Educational Laboratories. The Regional Educational Laboratory program, the Department's largest research and development investment, provides a wealth of assistance that can help schools end social promotion. The 10 regional laboratories help anyone involved in improving education to gain access to the best available research and knowledge from practice. The laboratories are especially strong in helping schools identify needs, suggesting appropriate remedies, and adapting reform programs to schools' own needs. Laboratories can also help schools improve curriculum, assessment, and evaluation practices.

Western Region
Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah
WestEd
Glen Harvey, Director
Tom Ross, Inquiries
730 Harrison St.
San Francisco, CA 94107
Phone: (415) 565-3000
Fax: (415) 565-3012
E-mail: tross@wested.org
Web site: http://www.wested.org
Specialty Area: Assessment and Accountability

Central Region
Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming
Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory
J. Timothy Waters, Executive Director
2550 S. Parker Rd., Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014
Phone: (303) 337-0990
Fax: (303) 337-3005
E-mail: twaters@mcrel.org
Web site: www.mcrel.org
Specialty Area: Curriculum, Learning and Instruction

Midwestern Region
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
Jeri Nowakowski, Executive Director
1900 Spring Rd., Suite 300
Oak Brook, IL 60521
Phone: (630) 571-4700
Fax: (630) 571-4716
E-mail: info@ncrel.org
Web site: http://www.ncrel.org
Specialty Area: Technology

Northwestern Region
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Executive Director
101 SW Main St., Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 275-9500 or (800) 547-6339
Fax: (503) 275-9489
E-mail: info@nwrel.org
Web site: http://www.nwrel.org
Specialty Area: School Change Processes

Pacific Region
American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau
Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
John W. Kofel, Executive Director
828 Fort Street Mall, Suite 500
Honolulu, HI 96813-4321
Phone: (808) 533-6000
Fax: (808) 533-7599
E-mail: kofelj@prel-oahu-1.prel.hawaii.edu
Web site: http://prel-oahu-1.prel.hawaii.edu
Specialty Area: Language and Cultural Diversity

Northeastern Region
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands
Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University (LAB)
Phil Zarlengo, Executive Director
222 Richmond St., Suite 300
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 274-9548 or (800) 521-9550
Fax: (401) 421-7650
E-mail: Phil_Zarlengo@Brown.edu
Web site: http://www.lab.brown.edu
Specialty Area: Language and Cultural Diversity

Mid-Atlantic Region
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C.
Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS)
Margaret Wang, Executive Director
933 Ritter Annex
1301 Cecil B. Moore Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Phone: (215) 204-3001
Fax: (215) 204-5130
E-mail: lss@vm.temple.org
Web site: http://www.temple.org/LSS
Specialty Area: Urban Education

Southeastern Region
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina
SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
Don Holznagel, Acting Executive Director
P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435
Phone: (910) 334-3211 or (800) 755-3277
Fax: (910) 334-3268
E-mail: rforbes@serve.org
Web site: http://www.serve.org
Specialty Area: Early Childhood Education

Southwestern Region
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
Wesley Hoover, Executive Director
211 E. Seventh St.
Austin, TX 78701
Phone: (512) 476-6861
Fax: (512) 476-2286
E-mail: whoover@sedl.org
Web site: http://www.sedl.org
Specialty Area: Language and Cultural Diversity

Appalachia Region
Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc. (AEL)
Terry Eidell, Director
1031 Quarrier St.
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325
Phone: (304) 347-0400 or (800) 624-9120
Fax: (304) 347-0487
E-mail: eidellt@ael.org
Web site: http://www.ael.org
Specialty Area: Rural Education

Equity Assistance Centers (formerly Desegregation Assistance Centers). The U.S. Department of Education supports ten regional equity assistance centers under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They provide assistance in the areas of race, gender, and national origin equity to public school districts to promote equal educational opportunities. For links to and more information about these centers visit the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/EdRes/EdFed/equity.html>.

Research

Research & Development Centers. The Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) supports 12 Research & Development Centers. These centers, which are located at major universities around the country, conduct research and development on topics such as reading, the education of at-risk children, early childhood development, postsecondary education, and education policy. These centers can be accessed through the Web at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ResCtr.html>.

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). ERIC offers many resources to parents, students, teachers, and administrators who are interested in improving achievement at their schools. ERIC is a national information system that provides ready access to an extensive body of education-related literature. It is the world's largest source of education information. The ERIC database contains nearly 1 million abstracts of documents and journal articles on

education research and practice. All ERIC clearinghouses have toll-free phone numbers and Web sites. In addition, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology hosts ASK ERIC, a service that responds within 48 hours to any question about education. You can ask questions directly from the AskEric Web site at <http://www.askeric.org> or e-mail <askeric@askeric.org>.

The Fund for the Improvement of Education. This fund supports nationally significant programs to improve the quality of education, help all students meet challenging state content standards, and contribute to the achievement of the National Education Goals. Grants and contracts may be awarded to state and local education agencies, institutions of higher education, and other public and private organizations and institutions. Recently, projects have been funded that might offer assistance to low-performing schools, including the development of state curriculum frameworks, content standards, and standards-based professional development projects. For more information, telephone Lois Weinberg at (202) 219-2147; e-mail: Lois_Weinberg@ed.gov; or fax: (202) 219-2053.

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education (ENC). ENC serves as a central dissemination point for information about curriculum materials and education reform. ENC promotes excellence in K-12 math and science education through a comprehensive collection of curriculum materials and nationwide dissemination of information and materials for all educators. ENC is located at Ohio State University, 1929 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1079; or telephone (614) 292-8389 or (800) 621-5785; or visit the Web site at <http://www.enc.org>.

The Eisenhower Regional Consortia for Mathematics and Science Education. The Consortia work in conjunction with the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse to support professional development of K-12 teachers, including those located in low-performing schools. The Consortia of 10 grantees provides technical assistance and disseminates information to help states and individual educators implement math and science programs in accordance with new standards. Specific areas of assistance are teacher professional development, student assessment, and uses of technology. For further information, telephone Carolyn Warren at (202) 219-2206.

Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program promotes school improvement by identifying and recognizing outstanding public and private schools, making research-based effectiveness criteria available to all schools so that they can assess themselves and plan improvements, and encouraging schools to share information about best practices. The program specifically celebrates those schools that have shown significant improvement over five years. For further information, see the Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/BlueRibbonSchools/about.html>.

Helpful Documents

The following documents are available by calling the U.S. Department of Education at **1-877-4ED-PUBS**. Additional publications are listed on the Department's Web site at <http://www.ed.gov>.

School Reform:

- *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Policymakers*
- *A Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century*
- *Answer the Call to Action: Put High Expectations and Standards of Excellence into Action in Your Schools. Questions, Ideas, and Information to Get You Started*
- *School-Based Reform Guide*
- *Implementing Schoolwide Programs: An Ideabook on Planning*
- *Improving Schools from the Bottom Up*

Reading Well and Independently by the End of Third Grade:

- See *America Reads Challenge* website *at* <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads> for the latest publications
- *Just Add Kids: A Resource Directory of Learning Partners, Reading Sites, and Other Literacy Organizations That Serve Children and Their Families*
- *Ready*Set*Read* (in English or in Spanish)
- *Simple Things*
- *Checkpoints for Progress*

Preparing Students Academically and Financially for College:

- See *Think College Early* website at <http://www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/early> for the latest publications
- *Preparing Your Child for College*
- *Getting Ready for College Early: A Handbook for Parents of Students in the Middle and Junior High School Years*
- *Think College? Me? Now?*

Mastering the Basic and Core Subjects to Meet High Standards:

- *Moving America to the Head of the Class*
- *Achieving the Goals, Goal 5: First in the World in Math and Science*

Teacher Quality:

- *Teachers and Goals 2000: Leading the Journey toward High Standards for All Students*
- *A New Teacher's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education*
- *New Skills for New Teachers: Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement*
- *Promising Practices: New Ways to Improve Teacher Quality*

Technology:

- *Parents' Guide to the Internet*

Family and Community Involvement in Education:

- See *Partnership for Family Involvement in Education* website at <http://pfie.ed.gov> for latest publications
- *A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships*
- *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Education*
- *Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers*
- *America Goes Back to School*
- *Employers, Families, and Education*
- *Reaching All Families: Creating Family-Friendly Schools*
- *Seven Good Practices for Families* (poster)
- *Summer Home Learning Recipes for Parents*
- *Welcome to School: Questions Parents Might Ask*
- *Ideabook: Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches*

Mentoring:

- *Yes You Can: A Guide for Establishing Mentoring Programs to Prepare Youth for College*

Extending Learning Time:

- *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids*

Safe and Drug-Free Schools:

- *Creating Safe Schools: A Resource Collection for Planning and Action*
- *Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention*
- *Ready*Set*Go*, an early childhood publication of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program
- *Success Stories '94: A Guide to Safe, Disciplined, & Drug-Free Schools*

The following documents are available by calling **OERI's National Library of Education** at **1-800-424-1616** or **1-877-4EDPUBS**

- *Read with Me: A Guide for Student Volunteers Starting Early Childhood Programs*
- *Tried and True: Tested Ideas for Teaching and Learning from the Regional Educational Laboratories*
- *Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning Reading*
- *Confronting the Odds: Students at Risk and the Pipeline to Higher Education*
- *Early Childhood Digest: Families and Teachers as Partners*
- *Reaching All Families*
- *Parent Involvement in Children's Education: Efforts by Public Elementary Schools*

Notes

1. For more on the effects of retention see Woodward and Kimmey, 1997; Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber, 1994; Westbury, 1994; Matzicopoulos and Morrison, 1992; Pierson and Connell, 1992; Reynolds, 1992; and Johnson, Merrell, and Stover, 1990; Setencich, 1994.

2. Hauser, 1998.

3. Peter D. Hart Associates, 1996, findings published in American Federation of Teachers, 1997.

4. National Center for Education Statistics, 1992.

5. National Center for Education Statistics, 1996; Current Population Statistics, 1996.

6. Asimov, 1998.

7. Hauser, 1998.

8. Karweit, 1998.

9. Current Population Statistics, 1996.

10. Public Agenda, 1998.

11. Peter D. Hart Associates, 1996. All of the findings were also published in American Federation of Teachers, 1997.

12. Peter D. Hart Associates, 1996, All of the findings were also published in American Federation of Teachers, 1997.

13. American Federation of Teachers, 1998.

14. Thompson, 1999.

15. Smith and Shepard, 1987; Setencich, 1994; Sakowicz, 1996.

16. Daley, 1998.

17. American Federation of Teachers, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, unpublished tabulations.

18. Later information from Education Week (*Quality Counts '99*) shows many states in the planning stages only for exit exams aligned to tenth-grade standards.

19. American Federal of Teachers, 1998.

20. Bishop, 1998.

21. Public Agenda, 1998.

22. U.S. Department of Education, 1994.

23. Public Agenda, 1996.

24. O'Day and Smith, 1993.

25. American Federation of Teachers, 1997; Education Week, 1998; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1998.

26. U.S. Department of Education, *Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: The Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I*, 1999.

27. National Research Council, 1998.

28. National Center for Education Statistics, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1997; Henderson and Lewis, 1997.

29. U.S. Department of Education, 1996, 1997.

30. U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

31. NAEP, 1996; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1996.

32. National Research Council, 1998.

33. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996.

34. U.S. Department of Education, 1996; Lewis, 1992.

35. U.S. Department of Education.

36. Oakes, 1985; 1995.

37. U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

38. U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

39. U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

40. *Education Week*, 1998.

41. McPartland, 1997.

42. McPartland, 1998.

43. Gallup, 1998

44. Education Week, 1999.

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